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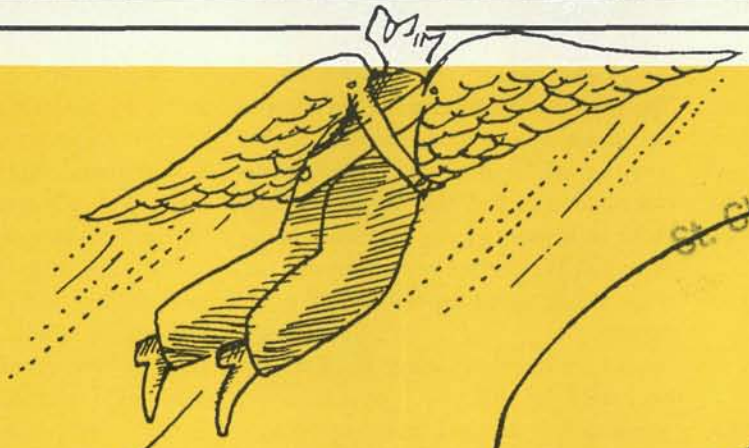
COMMONWEAL



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Upfront: Nancy Amidei on the abortion debate
Frank McConnell on the end of the Wall

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CORRESPONDENCE

Regenerate!

Poway, Calif.

To the Editors: Your special section, "Regenerating Catholicism" [September 14], was thoughtful and thought-provoking. It should receive quite some response. Professor Lisa Sowle Cahill contributed greatly to the over-all plea for a look at the church we are handing on to the next generation. We haven't done too good a job; they may shock us all by doing much better!

(MONSIGNOR) CHARLES DOLLEN

History omitted

Sacramento, Calif.

To the Editors: Somehow the editorial "Ends and means" [September 28] manages to leave out the history of the Middle East since World War I. The people who lived there had no say in the making of national boundaries. The British drew the lines solely for their self-interest. In determining Iraq's boundaries they deliberately shut off all access to the Gulf except for a small passage one could say was the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Iraqis never accepted these lines—not in the early days of the mandate, nor in 1933, when Iraq became independent, nor in 1961, when Kuwait became a fully independent state. In fact, in '61 the Iraqi ruler Abd al Karim claimed Kuwait as part of Iraq and threatened to do what Saddam Hussein did this year.

Though he speaks of international law and a new world order, George Bush acted only because of oil. The U.S. respects international law only when it suits us; our record in honoring the rights of other nations, especially in Central America, is dismal. Any new world order would have to take account of the Palestinian dilemma. Any new system for controlling the distribution of oil would have to respect the rights of owners: OPEC was founded to protect its member states against the form of free enterprise practiced by the oil companies, which robbed the producers of any fair share of oil profits.

As for Iraq's capacity for chemical, nuclear, and biological warfare, no one seems ready to point out that we have the same capacity and have already gone the nuclear route, not to mention our use of things like napalm and Agent Orange. Those who believe this episode has restored our image as superpower don't see that when we ask for money and support from other countries they will rightly expect a share of authority over the forces being deployed. We stopped being a superpower when we accepted dependency on other nations.

This crisis serves George Bush only to the extent that, till now, it has distracted attention from the state of the union here at home, where the news is all bad. Mr. Bush has no real military options. When the bodies come home, his support will dwindle. Churchill did not fight a war, so he said, to lose the empire. Neither did the French, but both did lose their colonies. We will not come out of a Middle East war in any better shape; we could wind up as bankrupt as the Soviet Union. The smartest thing Bush can do is to give the Saudis all the military equipment already there and bring the troops home. Let the Arabs settle the argument over boundaries themselves.

PATRICIA M. LEIPER

Truth in drawing

Granger, Ind.

To the Editors: Your issue of September 14 carried a penetrating cartoon of two cave men squatting miserably in a cave while a storm rages outside. The angry one is saying: "Just once I'd like to see the gods worship *us*." Your cartoonist is the first kindred spirit I've found on that question in twenty years of searching. In my article, "A Father's (Day) Reflection" (*Commonweal*, August 15, 1975), I started out debunking the idea that the Mass reenacted for us Jesus' appeasement of an angry Father. I showed how the theory of evolution had freed us from the atonement-appeasement mentality which results from seeing suffering as punishment.

To that point the article might have been illustrated by a well-known cartoon of that era which shows two cave men huddled on a ledge while lightning strikes around them. A saber-toothed tiger licks its chops on the cliff above, a bear is emerging from a cave the pair hadn't noticed behind them, and crocodiles peer up menacingly from the river below. One cave man says to the other, "The gods are angry." The other asks, "What have they got to be angry about?"

But your own cartoonist's complaint goes deeper, and I'll quote a passage from my article which I think provides an answer: "We could see the Mass not as Jesus' gift to the Father for us (a gift totally unnecessary) but as Jesus' gift of himself to us, to convince us of our worth, our tremendous potential. The Mass is not our worship of the alienated Father. It is precisely God's worship of *us*, expressing *our* worth, acknowledging that *we* are worth the life and death of God."

When my bride and I married, in the days before people began making up their own pallid vows, we promised each other: "With my body I thee worship." Jesus put his Last Supper and Crucifixion in that framework, worshiping us with his body.

(Continued on page 623)

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Bush's bubble

George Bush's bubble has burst. Despite his success with the Souter nomination, despite his adroit handling of the postinvasion Persian Gulf crisis, his strategy in addressing the budget impasse has been a disaster. First he wanted the deal to be made in secret, removing the process from public scrutiny and the messy, consensus-producing process envisioned by the Constitution. Then, having failed to convince the American people of the seriousness of the crisis (it is hard hearing about austerity over the noise of a speedboat) or the fairness of the deal, the president stumbled on symbols. (The plan for reducing the budget $500 billion over the next five years relied heavily on regressive excise taxes that would have raised the tax bill of Americans with incomes under $10,000 by 7.6 percent, those with incomes between $20,000 and $50,000 by around 3 percent, while those with incomes over $200,000 would have gotten by with a mere 1.7 percent increase. The unfairness was patent.) When the president could not persuade even his own party to vote for it, Democrats deserted in droves and rediscovered the issue of tax progressivity.

Mr. Bush's veto of the continuing resolution then shut down the Statue of Liberty, the Smithsonian, and the Grand Canyon. To prove his mettle, the president drove back to the White House from Camp David while his helicopter returned empty. Getting caught in a Beltway traffic jam, however, outdid the Grand Canyon as a metaphor for Mr. Bush's stop-and-go leadership. Three days later he signed a continuing resolution nearly identical to the one he had vetoed. That same day he told Congress that his long opposition to income tax raises for the very wealthy was now on the bargaining table; but several hours later, pressured by Republican senators, he backtracked again. Bushwacked!

George Bush is a divided man trying to lead a divided party and a divided government, in a country where, in part because of his policies, the chasm between the rich and the poor grows daily. To be nominated vice-president in 1980, he sold his soul to Reaganomics. He eventually won the presidency in 1988 holding fast to its Midas instincts. But as an oil man, he knows deep down that wells run dry. How could they not after a half-decade of unprecedented peacetime deficits, of continuing trade deficits, of the growing cost of the savings and loan bailout (nearly $100 billion of which, over the next three years, was not even included in the proposed budget agreement)? With an economy on the verge of recession, with state and local governments no longer able to pay for responsibilities shed by Washington, and with lenders from abroad staying home, George Bush needs to face up to getting the nation's house in order. It can only be done the old-fashioned way: planning and paying for it.

After the profligacy of the Reagan era what is needed is a thorough reexamination of the nation's agenda, a realignment of its programs. Such a reappraisal must include

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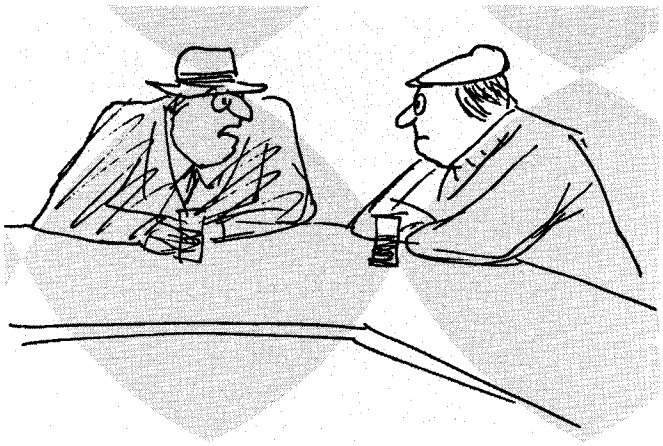

"You know what you're looking at, Charlie? You're looking at a borrower."

scrutiny of all entitlements and the behemoth military budget. It must set goals based on tough, realistic financing. The latter means equitable taxation based on a truly progressive standard, one that taxes those most able to pay and most rewarded by the system; and one that encourages investment in our most important capital assets—the health, welfare, and education of the nation's future generations.

Such a shift in direction and purpose will come only from a president willing to put the fate of the country and the economy above discredited ideologies and the howls of threatened interest groups. He will have to unseal his lips and tell the people the truth about their condition: The coffers are empty, the bubble has burst.

CURMUDGEON, WITH HEART

Dan Herr, who died last month at seventy-three, was not the founder of Chicago's Thomas More Association, but from 1948 till just yesterday he was its soul. He was as Irish and as acerbic and as quickwitted and as intolerant of fads, foibles, and foolishness as he was Catholic; which is to say, supremely. He kowtowed to nobody, twitted everybody, and gathered friends. To these friends, he was absolutely loyal and on occasion seriously helpful; that is, as long as they were reasonably loyal to [his] principles. (If they strayed, he turned their photos on his office wall to the wall.) Through the association (its book club, its press, its newsletters, its bookshop, its magazine the *Critic*), he introduced a great many people to whatever liveliness could be found in Catholic literary and intellectual circles. The staff he recruited and retained divided its time between bantering briskly with the boss and briskly getting the job done; they are his legacy. Along with everybody, he liked cats; like almost nobody, he liked pigeons and found surreptitious ways of feeding them. He was a little guy with a big megaphone. He was soft and hard as the occasion required. May he rest in an interesting peace.

ET CETERA

ANTI-SEMITE? Of the invective exchanged between newspaper columnist and TV star Patrick Buchanan (on the right) and *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal (often on the right), one is initially tempted to say it couldn't happen to two nicer fellas. Former *Times* managing editor Rosenthal is a figure of legendary ego, volatility, and vitriol; Buchanan an ideologue of uncompromising insensitivity. Although not as bombastic as Buchanan, Rosenthal is often as strident and uncharitable to those with whom he disputes. In this spirit, Rosenthal labeled Buchanan an anti-Semite in a September 14 column for the latter's contention that "only two groups...are beating the drums for war in the Middle East—the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States."

Rosenthal certainly was right in rebuking Buchanan on this issue. As usual, Buchanan was giving only a partial, distorted, and inflammatory version of the facts. That, it seems, is what he's paid to do. Yes, Israel has been urging the United States to fight Iraq sooner, not later—but so have many Arab states. Jews and non-Jews alike think Saddam Hussein an outsized criminal as well as a threat to American interests.

Rosenthal went on to compile a lengthy indictment of Buchanan's alleged anti-Semitic opinions, confessing he long had been "silently contemptuous of him" but "did not address the Buchanan situation before because it was so distasteful." Proposing some dubious correlations, Rosenthal even linked Buchanan's attitude to the Nazis and Auschwitz.

Buchanan's remarks about Jews are often grotesque and insupportable, and cynically so. So are many of his remarks about blacks, immigrants, liberals, the poor, apartheid, crime, AIDS—well, you name it. He is a geyser of hyperbole, offering only the grossest caricature of his political opponents' arguments. In this, at least, he is a firm believer in equality—everyone he disagrees with is treated shabbily. In his oblique but hardly subtle rhetoric, Buchanan has pandered to prejudice for years. He was not Ronald Reagan's director of communications for nothing.

But while Buchanan's antics are despicable, is it just or honest to call him a Nazi? Surely he's more polemical clown than storm trooper, and does not damning him as racist and genocidal only poison the public debate further, raising the rhetorical volume to literally deafening levels? And isn't that precisely the atmosphere in which the Buchanans of this world thrive?

The evil of anti-Semitism has been responsible for unspeakable crimes. In recognition of that legacy and continued danger, precision and forbearance should mark any such accusation, lest it lose its rightful and necessary power of condemnation.

COMING
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FALL BOOKS

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REPORT FROM ALL OVER

VARIANT VIEWS ON ABORTION

CONTINUING THE DEBATE

Some months ago in a weak moment, I agreed to join the debate on abortion that *Commonweal*'s editors proposed to their readers (February 23, 1990) by passing along comments I hear in my travels. That seemed a relatively easy, uncontentious way to take part. But since I hear more on the prochoice side of the issue and *Commonweal*'s readers presumably know the other side, the report that follows may seem less "uncontentious" and more like a long string of complaints. That warning offered, here goes.

First the people. Except that I spoke with more women than men, pigeon-holing those who raise the issue isn't easy. They include conservatives, liberals, Republicans, Democrats, elected officials, business people, students, welfare recipients, and members of the Junior League. I meet people from all walks of life, all races, incomes, ages, and creeds. In one respect they are atypical—most are active in their communities: running soup kitchens, staffing hot-lines, volunteering, or serving on the boards of social agencies. I tend to meet people who are trying to help in ways large and small, from donating food to taking crack-addicted babies or ex-cons into their homes. Many are active in their churches.

The stands. By now the lines are pretty well drawn. Most of the people I meet oppose abortion as a substitute for responsible sex and accept some limits on the right to abortion, especially in the later stages of pregnancy. At the same time, most want abortion available under some circumstances—though there are differing views on what those should be (e.g., in cases of rape or incest; when the health of either mother or fetus is severely compromised). Virtually everyone would agree that respect for human life and the need to protect the vulnerable members of our society are important, but there is little agreement about what those words mean.

The criticisms I hear of the Catholic position on abortion (or the prolife position generally) tend to fall under five rough headings.

Intolerance. Repeatedly, I heard the view expressed that Catholics have no interest in a dialogue in the usual sense, and tolerate others' views only in order to attack them. They are what one woman called "abortion ayatollahs": disrespectful of other views, and contemptuous of those who hold them.

Some feel themselves aggressively, even offensively, evangelized. Catholics may not go door-to-door like Jehovah's Witnesses, but on abortion that's how it comes across—nothing less than conversion will do. It's hard to have a dialogue, someone pointed out, when just holding another opinion makes you an evil, immoral baby-killer.

"I just wish," a New Mexico nurse said, "that even half the righteousness and energy that's gone into fighting school-based clinics, condoms, and abortion had gone into fighting ignorance, poverty, and no health care. That's my idea of prolife."

Insincerity, hypocrisy. Many doubt that the opposition to abortion is sincere. Often it is described as too irrational for anyone smart to take seriously: for example, someone who heard Missouri Attorney General Webster speak could not believe he was *the* Webster because "he seemed quite intelligent"; and another said of a prolife legislator: "Until I learned his stand on abortion, I thought he was smart."

That leads to an assumption that strong opposition to abortion must be "fronting" for something else—an inability to deal honestly with sexuality; control; or a desire to punish women for sexual independence. An Iowa lawyer explained that some people (male church leaders, for example) equate control over women with morality, so a society in which women have reproductive freedom must be an immoral society. (He used to think like that, he says, when he still thought men were in charge.)

Or it is assumed to be a front for right-wing political goals. "Why else," asked a man from Long Island, "isn't there an 'Operation Rescue' for the babies who die because their mothers couldn't get prenatal care, or decent welfare? Those people don't care if the babies live or die, they just know a good political issue when they see one."

What appears to be selective enforcement—that is, excommunication is threatened for supporting abortion, but not for defenders of contraception—is also seen in political terms. ("You know why that happens, don't you? Catholic lay people support birth control. Go after that and they won't have anybody left.") In other words, abortion is opposed because doing so serves political ends; contraception is ignored for the same reason.

Hypocrisy also gets mentioned when prolife activists take what appear to be antilife stands when they support capital punishment, or oppose public funding for "special needs" children, prenatal care, child care, or welfare. In one community I heard repeatedly about the "so-called prolife" activists who opposed a group home for babies with AIDS. "What is 'prolife' about bringing a baby into this world and then leaving it to die?" they asked.

But nothing brings out the charges of hypocrisy like opposition to sex education, family planning, or the use of condoms. The church may believe its position is clear but others don't see it. Most Americans have no moral objections to the idea of birth control (and know Catholics who practice it), so opposing both abortion and the means to prevent pregnancy is hard to swallow. And withholding information about safe sex while so many are dying of AIDS just seems immoral.

Fanaticism. Many who agree that human life deserves respect and the vulnerable deserve protection think Catholics go too far. Some of that no doubt springs from the fact that many people with strong moral and religious beliefs do not believe a fetus incapable of surviving outside the womb is a "child," a "member of society," or "an innocent human life," and insisting doesn't make it so. The potential for human life puts a fetus in a special category, but to one who does not believe that life exists, fully

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human from the moment of conception—and many thoughtful, religious, ethical people do not—abortion is not necessarily a "tragedy," while forcing a woman to bear an unwanted child may be.

Try reading what Cardinal Joseph Bernardin says in, "The Consistent Ethic after 'Webster'" (*Commonweal*, April 20, 1990) through the eyes of one who believes that a nonviable fetus is not a "child" or "innocent human life," and you may see the point. Without that belief the arguments lose their force, and the "significant limits" the cardinal seeks agreement on make sense only as applied to abortions in the third trimester. Those holding such views don't see themselves as callously indifferent to human life, but as having a different understanding of when human life begins (something not influenced by references to a previously unheard of "natural law").

Religion and pluralism. That believers might act on what their religion teaches is understandable; that others should have to is not. Christian Science beliefs on health care and Islamic beliefs about the role of women are not imposed on Catholics and those religions do not lobby to do so. What they want is the right to practice their own beliefs. In the same way, critics say, Catholics can believe that a fetus is "fully human" and Catholic doctors and nurses can be free not to perform abortions, without converting those beliefs into law.

That does not seem unreasonable when members of so many faith communities support abortion under some circumstances, or are divided on the topic—Presbyterian, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Unitarian, Islam (in the first forty days), reform and conservative Judaism, Lutheran, Episcopalian, American Baptist, Sikh, and Buddhist among them. Many more support abortion when the mother's life is in danger or in cases of rape or incest, including Hinduism, Southern Baptist, Jehovah's Witnesses, African Methodist Episcopal, Assembly of God, and Orthodox Judaism. Still others, including Shintoism, the Friends, and Zen Buddhism believe it is a matter of individual conscience. Thus when Catholics (or anyone) insist that theirs is the only politically acceptable position and must become national law, strong feelings are evoked.

Political activism. Ever since I realized that both sides were trying to influence the Supreme Court in the *Webster* case, I've known that this is a rare political issue—and not only because Americans don't normally "lobby" the Supreme Court. Just when most forms of political activity are waning, abortion is getting people to take an interest in politics.

That's especially surprising because so many of those involved are not directly affected by whether public funds are available for abortion, or even whether abortion is legal. Many are past childbearing age, are men, or can afford private abortions (including the costs of going to another country if necessary) for themselves or their daughters. It is rare to get middle-class voters politically activated (even as single-issue voters) over something that does not affect them directly.

By way of contrast, American women face a much greater risk of being poor at some point in their lives than of being denied an abortion, and poverty maims and kills. Yet most women aren't active against policies that perpetuate poverty, and politicians aren't risking their seats for supporting them.

But for many decent, caring people, ultimately there's a sense of misplaced energy, of time and money that might be better spent. Perhaps the most commonly expressed view I hear is also the most conciliatory, namely the wish that everyone who cares about human life should spend more time fighting poverty, AIDS, teen pregnancy, and the growth in the numbers of crack- and alcohol-affected babies, and less time fighting each other.

Postscript: Those who were wondering if I wrote this as a way to get my own views out may like to know: (a) I didn't ask for this and (b) I didn't seek out abortion conversations, they came to me.

As to the views expressed, I agree with some of them. I don't write off opposition to abortion as insincere or dumb, and I don't subscribe to any of the conspiracy theories. But neither do I think a fetus is fully human from the moment of conception. And despite having more exposure to Catholic thinking on the subject than most of those I talk to, I don't find the Catholic explanations persuasive. I care a lot about whether our laws reflect respect for vulnerable people and all human life, but I don't see abortion policy as the test of whether or not that is so. Finally, I agree with those who find the opposition to condoms, contraceptives, and sex education unconscionable.

NANCY AMIDEI

Nancy Amidei works with state and local groups on a variety of health, social policy, and advocacy issues. She travels to roughly half the states each year.

REPORT FROM GERMANY

SOMETHING GAINED—& LOST

WHAT UNIFICATION FEELS LIKE

"How thick *is* the Wall, Frank?" That was the first question a friend asked me when I got back, in 1988, from six months teaching at Humboldt University in East Berlin. I thought it was a pretty silly question at the time. I know better now.

After half-a-year living and working in one of the most rigorously monitored of socialist states, I was, like all half-cocked travelers, brimming with insights to amaze and impress my stay-at-home pals. Like: The GDR ran on a systematized paranoia—the infamous *Stasi*, or Secret Police—that would have made Orwell or Kafka look for another line of work. And like: Despite this, some things about the system were—well, dammit, *good*. People managed to live as happily and warmly, it seemed to us, as they did in the States. My *parteilich* friends—Party members—seemed seriously devoted to socialism, to working for a vision of universal good will (and *we* make Donald Trump a

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media icon). When I jokingly told a Berlin colleague of mine, Horst, that my Catholic background would probably keep me out of the Party, he said gravely—Horst is a grave fellow—"Oh, no, Frank. We wouldn't admit you because you think everything's a joke."

These, and many more, were among the *dicta* I was all set to launch at the drop of an *obiter*. And what did I get? "How thick is the Wall?" is what I got.

Then came November 1989, and suddenly the Wall wasn't thick at all. Gloria Steinem called it the first feminine revolution, because there was no bloodshed and then everybody went shopping. George Will, on national TV, intoned that "the spirit of Thomas Jefferson is abroad in the world"—ever see a conservative on speed? And, as they sing in *Carousel*, it was a real nice clambake, and we all had a real good time.

I did get a Christmas card from Horst. I quote: "We are of course glad that many corruptions, like the *Stasi*, are gone. Still, Frank, I can't help feeling that one of mankind's dreams has died." I did not think it was a joke.

So when my wife and I were invited to return to Humboldt this August to teach a crash course in "American Speech and Culture," it was—for me at least—a little like planning a date with the girl you took to the prom in '68. You keep telling yourself how great it'll be, after all this time. And telling yourself. We knew that problems had already set in: epidemic unemployment, a nightmare of currency regularization, the massive failure of GDR industry to compete. But there's knowing, and then there's knowing.

The fact is, we missed the party, but we got there for the hangover.

Our first lesson in the thickness of the Wall was the drive from Tegel Airport in the West to our apartment in the East. *Berlin Haupstadt der GDR*, Berlin the Capital City of the GDR—that was how every map, roadsign, and even matchbox referred to the place, and it was silly and brave. Despite its shabbiness, its exploitation by the USSR, and its annual fight against bankruptcy, it kept insisting that it was the *Haupstadt* and, somehow, people believed: that it *was* a city, not "East Berlin" but *Berlin Haupstadt*. Act as if you have faith, says Augustine, and faith will come.

But now the Wall was down, reunification was, as the Stones say, just a kiss away, and we were driving through West Berlin's Kurfursteindam—Vegas with sausages—into the grey buildings and tiny shops that we, too, had thought of as a city. But it wasn't a *Haupstadt* or even a *Stadt* anymore. It was just the poor part of town.

Our teaching gig was supposed to be for three weeks. We quit after four days, and left Berlin four days later. (Four days after *that* the coalition government collapsed, but I fear we can't take credit.) We quit because we, and our students, were being scammed. They were forty, middle-aged teachers of high-school Russian. There are about 160,000 of them in the GDR. There are about 6,000 teachers of high school English. All that, of course, has to change now. So unless our students, whose English was not rusty but rusted, could pass, *by September*, a competency exam in English, they would be—to use the one English word everybody in the GDR knows these days—sacked. Our high-falutin' course in American Culture (tapes, videos, etc.) had been sold to *them* as a last chance to learn enough about irregular verbs to keep off the street. But on the third day of our class Bonn announced that in February 1991 it would be sending 1,000 teachers of English to East Berlin to "fill the need." Is there such a concept as kitchen colonialism?

The day my wife, Celeste, and I told them we were quitting, and why, half were angry and half, worse, were in tears; not because we were the Fred and Ginger of teaching, but because they knew this was it. I had become pretty friendly with one guy named Klaus. The last day we stood in the hall and chatted. "We know about what will happen, *nothing*," he said. "They tell us, and what can we say? I don't know. My wife is sacked, my son is sacked, and—maybe I sell insurance, ja?"

The sadness gets more complicated, though. (I think the central fact about Berlin, of all cities, is that nothing to do with it is *ever* simple.) These folks were frightened and confused—because *their wish came true*. Sure, Berlin felt like a *Haupstadt*. But sure, too, just across the Wall, was West Berlin, brimming with *stuff* and seductive as all hell. Every junkie knows the routine: hey, wouldn't you like to try it *once*? And every junkie knows that "once" is not a real word. Not in the junk lexicon.

"I feel like I'm in a prison!" had exclaimed our friend, A., about the Wall in '88. A. had a lovely flat in the center of town and a prestigious job as editor of Berlin's best arts and letters weekly. Now she will very likely lose both. And when we saw her this August she explained that "we wanted some changes, you know. But we also wanted to keep so many of our own traditions, our own socialism."

Die Wende is the way the East Germans refer to November '89: "the turning." It's already part of the language, and already becoming encrusted with mythology. Some will tell you that it was a vicious, suicidal last gesture by Honecker—or Egon Krenze—to destroy a failed socialism by flooding the land with Deutschmarks, all very Wagnerian. Some will tell you that in those last months concentration camps were being planned for liberals in case the GDR survived. Some—and this is the really ugly part, and I'll get to it in a minute—will tell you it was the Jews. What all the *Wende* myths have in common is their sense of personal helplessness: *somebody* did *something*, and now *we* have to pay.

I used to quarrel with Horst about this. The difference between Marx and Jesus, I'd insist, was that Marx was much the more trusting, innocent man. He *really believed* that if you set up the kinder, gentler society—and just enforced it for a while—people would just naturally get kind and gentle. It's Montessori metaphysics, and it's sweet. And it can kill you.

It can kill you because it tells you, at some deep level, that people never screw up. But they do. (The currently unfashionable name for this is "Original Sin," and that's all it means, really.) *We* do. When Celeste suggested to A. that, if she got sacked, *she* could find work as a teacher of English, A.'s response, no kidding, was: "Well, maybe. But we're not used to making such plans for ourselves, you know." Well, yeah.

But there are always people who *will* make plans once the

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monitor has left the playground; people who are not kind or gentle at all.

A small illustration. One afternoon my stepson, Eric, and I were walking from our flat to the neighborhood grocery to get ol' stepdad some beer. And as we went through the pedestrian underpass we read the graffiti: swastikas, *Auslaender Scheisse*, and of course the ever-popular *Juden Raus*! One graffito broke me up: a big spray-painted swastika with the slogan, *Sieg Heiel*! "Dumb bastard can't even spell his own language," I laughed. "We don't have to worry about *him*." And, "I think maybe we do," said Eric—as gravely as Horst himself could have done it. A wise kid, is my stepson.

This is not—repeat not—one of those "German reunification means the fascist beast will rise from the ashes" pieces. For one thing, the fascist beast is everywhere. America certainly has enough lunatic Aryan-supremacy headbangers to get up a scratch basketball game (skinheads vs. brownshirts?) with the new Germany.

But in the GDR, until *die Wende*, that poison in the soul was denied, repressed by a system that, though partly corrupt and hopelessly artificial, nevertheless *thought* it could enforce a society where horror was no longer possible. That horror, the horror implicit in all moral choice (you *can* fall) was, besides VCR's and Marlboros, what the Wall kept out. Until very recently, all of Freud's work was forbidden in the GDR, which is both tragic and appropriate, since no one understood better than he the urge to deny the shadow in the self, and the terrible price of that denial.

One wanted to shout, sometimes, "But don't you *see*?" One didn't. Perhaps one should have. Auden's phrase keeps coming back to me: "Children afraid of the dark/Who have never been happy or good." So in the GDR the sons and daughters of the revolution—one of mankind's dreams—have been granted their wish for escape, but with the condition that, the wish once granted, they can never, never have it back like it was.

The last day in Berlin, Celeste, Eric and I went to the Wall, at the Brandenburg Gate—once the center of this most melancholy of cities. The noble horses at the top of the Gate were gone. Some of the drunken celebrators of *die Wende*, it seems, had decided it would be a really keen idea to smash them. In what used to be no man's land were stalls selling sausage, beer—all West German—and discarded Party pins, army decorations, and other GDR memorabilia. The garbage cans were overflowing and the flies were having the time of their lives, and there were even carriage rides available, at DM 5, around the old border. The Wall was still there but it had been chipped away for souvenirs and was about as noticeable as an umpire at a ballgame. There, Celeste, Eric, and I met A., Heike Schneider, a GDR journalist, Epi, his adopted black African son, and Gerlinde.

Gerlinde is forty-five, a devoted socialist, with the soul of a lotus blossom and the mind of a steel trap, and one of the very few people I have met to whom the word, "lovely," properly applies. Celeste and A. and Heike all lined up in front of the Wall—on the Western side, of course—and I, Pentax at the ready, told Gerlinde to join them for a group photo.

And, "No," she said, looking at the remaining shards of the Wall. "It's just too—terrible."

And then I got it. It was about cigarettes. In '88, when I'd first crossed over to the West after two months in the *Haupstadt*, I'd been shocked to see cigarettes thrown away only half smoked. We just didn't do that in the East: not because there was a shortage, and not because we couldn't afford more, but because, weirdly enough, the silly system we lived under taught us not to *waste*. And on the Kurfursteindam they were buying cigarettes and smoking them halfway and didn't *know* what that *meant* to people who were, for the sake of the revolution, dragging it all the way down to the filter.

So Gerlinde said, "No—it's just too terrible," and I looked at the pavement and I saw hundreds of Marlboros and Kents and Dunhills half-smoked and tossed away. And I took a last drag on my Players, and I tossed that, too.

And that's how thick the Wall was. FRANK McCONNELL

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POSTMODERN WARFARE

WHAT'S IN CHARGE HERE?

MACHINES WILL MAKE THE CHOICES

Now that we're accustomed to the disconnectedness of life, amply reflected in art and literature—the condition of so-called postmodernity—perhaps we should consider the prospects for postmodern war. The era of the disjointed narrative, of channel-hopping, of Alvin Toffler's "blip culture," of shriveled attention spans, has clearly arrived. With a little luck war can meet the new standard, and the Persian Gulf presents excellent prospects for a test case.

Postmodern war will be simply war—disconnected war, war without discernible political purpose, war divorced from policy. In postmodern war hardware will make policy, dictate its own use, start and finish the thing. Indeed, the notion that hardware determines strategy is already well established in the exotic regions inhabited by nuclear war theorists. The wars of today and tomorrow are likely, I submit, to provide fine illustrations of Jacques Ellul's dictum that technique, now a virtually autonomous force, "elicits and conditions" political change.

Hardware, then, in this brave new world, will rightly identify alien hardware as its true enemy and seek only to annihilate it. Nothing else will matter, and woe unto the national leader who imagines it could be otherwise. Hardware will fight simply because alien hardware exists.

In postmodern war we won't worry about future allegiances of foreign masses. If their hardware is insignificant, they will be insignificant. If they possess or acquire serious hardware,

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ours will seek it out when necessary and repeat the agreeable exercise. And if tears are shed in this country for the dead and the maimed, they will not likely count for much in the next election. Postmodern wars will be swiftly prosecuted, and in the America of the four-minute attention span, bygones instantly become bygones. Electoral victory, everyone knows, depends entirely on television—hardware—which lives by soundbites, not memory.

Day by day, as I write, the hardware piles up in the sands of Saudi Arabia. Fighters, bombers, and fighter-bombers arrive from distant bases; the fighters streak out over the arid plains, announcing themselves, advertising their capabilities, searching for others of their kind, however inferior. Great ships and cargo planes disgorge tanks, field guns, self-propelled guns, armored personnel carriers; these take up positions opposite the alien machines, sight them in, prepare to do automated battle. Troops appear by the thousands, bearing smaller machines, sometimes looking themselves like machines in their gas-protective suits. Missile-firing machines, ocean-going machines, bombing machines, shelling machines: all are programmed and positioned to destroy the enemy machines whenever the signal is sent.

Yes, of course, it will be a human being somewhere "in the loop" who will send the signal. But what will decide for him—or rather his technicians—for or against battle? In the age of technical dominance that question reduces to one of assessing the comparative qualities and quantities of machinery and the probability of success in pre-emptive attack. Everything else is mere propaganda, the girding of Teflon, as it were, for the quadrennial soundbite wars.

It's all a bit eerie. In the early nineteenth century the Prussian military thinker Karl von Clausewitz reckoned that the world might one day see the advent of "absolute war"—war devoid of the guidance and restraints of policy, war fought for the sole purpose of destruction. He thought it would come from a surfeit of policy—"ambitious policy"—but as it turns out, a surfeit of hardware works just as well. In a sense, however, Clausewitz had it dead right, for today policy and hardware are one.

We're probably still some small distance from the pure case of postmodern war. There remains in high places some visible, if faint, concern for matters apart from hardware and technology, perhaps even some for the opinions of others. But have faith; we'll get there.

ROBERT ALAN COOK

Robert Alan Cook is a free-lance writer who is working on a book on theories of war.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

SPIRITUALITY MADE SIMPLE

JUST STAY AWAKE

Where are the real grown-ups? When I was a child I thought of the grown-ups as people who knew things, were sure of themselves, completely competent. They were clear and balanced, never off-center. If a grown-up was angry it was no doubt for a good cause. They knew things, in an apparently thorough way, that I had to struggle to know in part; they knew, whereas I was (or always felt I was) in the dark. This, of course, was before adolescence, when parents and other adults were almost always wrong and just didn't get it.

There seems to be a need for grown-ups, for the myth of the thoroughly competent person who can tell us what we need to know. I do think that there are people who are truly authoritative, people who know a particular field; yet their lives may be a mess. I also think that there are people who are true doctors of the soul and can tell us what we need to know—to mature spiritually if we learn how to listen. It is essential to know that they are, like us, incompetent in some fairly basic ways.

What I mean about our need for believing in grown-ups is something else. It is a belief in the wrong kind of authority, a belief that those who can help us in the struggle live themselves in a state of clarity and serenity. I think it is a survival of an illusion all of us have for a time, maybe need for a time, as children. (The idea of necessary youthful illusions is interesting, and leads to a notion of maturity as a process that requires disillusionment.) The childish belief that grown-ups exist is much like the attachment a lot of adults have to certain political or spiritual leaders, and is dangerous.

After I graduated from college and found myself in situations where I checked into hotels and identified myself as a writer or journalist for one periodical or another, I enjoyed playing the role, and always thought of it, at some level, as impersonating an adult. I felt like a kid pretending he knew stuff he didn't know and could act at levels he really wasn't competent to operate on. A funny part of the excitement was knowing at a deep level that if you did it well enough no one would break into your room at 3:00 A.M. and flip on the lights and yell, "Caught you impersonating a real grown-up." I waited for the bracing feeling of real maturity, real competence to develop over time.

What happened instead was a kind of routine, a slow growth in habit—but none of that sense of competence I'd longed for. It was more like slowly learning the habits of a hunter who lays snares and goes back to them periodically, to see if he's caught anything. That was as good as the job got. I don't know why I put this in the past tense; that's as good as the job is to this day. From talking to people who had "made it" in the profession I found myself in, I learned that their own process had not been all that different from my own; there is no passage from the plain of struggle to the plateau of ease. There is no sense of mastery. Anytime you write something that comes

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off all right, you wonder where it came from.

This is true in the spiritual life as well. When I was younger I thought of spirituality as a kind of skill, a way of mastering concentration and attention, an ability to be clear that could be summoned at will, like pulling down a chart or adjusting a pair of binoculars. It was a matter, almost, of learning the right technique. It was, I thought, something to be done by me. There are a lot of books that suggest precisely this sort of thing, even as they nod to the Pauline understanding that prayer is done in us by the Spirit.

I do think, still, that paying attention has everything to do with spirituality, and a certain clarity can result from the right kind of attention. But it isn't something I can simply do, and it isn't a skill to be mastered. That is part of what makes it so important. Over a number of years it has become clear that the struggle to be attentive; to be clear about my own hard-heartedness and failures of compassion; to know what I must do next; having fallen, to learn what repentance means—all of this is part of a process that includes attention to many random blessings and occasions for joy; and it isn't to be tied together neatly. Finally it isn't a skill I master, but more like the effort to stay awake when the temptation to fall asleep is pressing and constant.

The spiritual life is a process something like erosion, or something like the way driftwood is formed by the passing current. Our participation in it, apart from the struggle, may be limited to a present awareness of what the alternative is: not to be formed, or to think of the self as autonomous. At bottom there are two alternatives: repentance and hardness of heart. There may be moments of deep stillness, but they are gifts—you can't make them happen. There are certainly moments of pain and deep discomfort. And although those who have been on the road longer than we have are important teachers for us, no one here is really a master. There aren't any grown-ups here, in the sense that children understand the word.

This has important consequences. For one thing, and at the most basic level, understanding this ends the process of looking around for the right way, the right technique—will I learn centering prayer, make an Ignatian retreat, reject the Ignatian method in favor of the prayer of the heart, go to a spirituality workshop, and then really get my spiritual life going? This is all distraction. There are certainly ways of prayer that are helpful, and books (my own favorites are *The Way of a Pilgrim* and *The Practice of the Presence of God*), and of course they should be used. Some are more congenial than others. The image-centered Ignatian way, for example, goes against the grain for me, and I might even have a theological quarrel with it. But the point here is that the search for a right way or a right technique can be a way of avoiding the present moment, which is the only one you have. The old saying, "Do what you are doing," applies here. Don't look for the right way of praying or being attentive to God's presence. Pray. Pay attention.

There are other consequences of dropping the hunt for the right sort of spirituality. One involves an ease with oneself and even with one's failures, and an abandonment of the need to assume that the truth lies elsewhere. It is right here: you may not feel it or know it, but it is not because you haven't found a magic key that will unlock it. If you feel some revelation is being kept from you, it may indeed be—but that could be a mercy. If you are trying to pay attention to God's work in you and in the world, you will see what you need to see when you have to see it. As one priest told me, "When you give up your expectations, you give up your disappointments." The desire for a spiritual state different from the one you are in isn't much different from any other form of lust, or any appetite. It is an expression of what the Tibetan Buddhist writer Chogyam Trungpa called "spiritual materialism."

I have met a man whose God-filled quality was startling; and I know that his most keen awareness is of spiritual struggle, and of his own failure to be what he is called to be. He is of great help to many people; but this is not because he has attained a form of mastery they lack, but because he has been more constant in the struggle. It is a joy to know—and to meet someone who knows—that we really are assisted by the Spirit in this work. It is apparent in him, and not in me. That is not, however, because he is a different kind of creature, or has a competence the rest of us lack. He's simply fought off sleep longer.

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

BAGHDAD AS TARGET?

AN ORDER TO BE REFUSED

Washington, D.C., Baghdad, and the Middle East are poised precariously between war and diplomacy. While the outcome is far from being predetermined, there is much talk and commentary in the U.S. press about the logic of war and not sufficient attention to issues of the legitimacy of such a course and the limits it must observe.

The war being discussed is not an enterprise like Grenada or Panama; the scale of violence which would be unleashed and the stakes involved require that, unlike the two previous invasions, the moral debate on legitimacy and limits must be pressed before decisions are taken. The questions of *whether* force should be used, and *how* it should be limited if used, are matters for both the public and policymakers.

The need for public restraint on the use of force was vividly illustrated in a widely publicized interview given by Gen.

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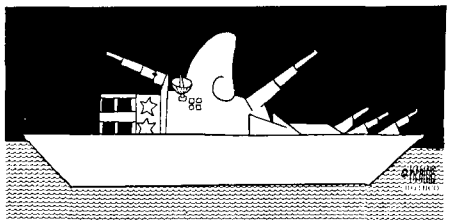
Michael J. Dugan to the *Washington Post*. On September 16, Gen. Dugan said war against Iraq would be primarily an air war and that, "the cutting edge would be in downtown Baghdad." Dugan was immediately fired as chief of staff of the Air Force, but it was not evident that his dismissal included a repudiation of his views. The emphasis of Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney in dismissing Dugan was on the general's indiscretion in speaking publicly.

Dugan's comments were a direct repudiation of the central principle of limitation on warfare: the protection of the civilian population. The strongest moral statement in the peace pastoral of the U.S. bishops reads: "Retaliatory action, whether nuclear or conventional, which would indiscriminately take many wholly innocent lives, lives of people who are in no way responsible for reckless actions of their government, must also be condemned."

The sentence is remarkably useful in understanding the status and the fate of the civilian population of Baghdad (and the Western hostages undoubtedly held at the most sensitive targets in the city). Precisely because Saddam Hussein runs a ruthless police state, the civilians of Iraq must not be held responsible for his "reckless actions." Dugan's comments were both shocking and irresponsible. Their one redeeming, if unintended, result is that they have forced onto the public agenda an explicit consideration of politics, ethics, and strategy in the Persian Gulf. It was clear even before he spoke that, if war comes, the United States sees its comparative advantage in air power. For this reason, the Dugan view of how air power should be used must be decisively refuted.

The argument against the Dugan position should be made at the level of policy and personal conscience. Specifically, it needs to be said often—by people in and out of the government—that "bombing Baghdad" is morally unacceptable policy. It also needs to be made clear in the public debate, and by chaplains in their uniquely important role, that orders "to bomb Baghdad" should be refused. The chaplains have the teaching authority with them; *The Challenge of Peace* said: "No Christian can rightfully carry out orders or policies deliberately aimed at killing noncombatants."



The pastoral letter simply echoed the classical argument against bombing civilian centers made by John Ford, S.J., in the midst of World War II (*Theological Studies*, 1941). The Ford article, "The Morality of Obliteration Bombing," could be usefully invoked in the Persian Gulf debate for two reasons. Then and now, "psychological" reasons were invoked to support a strategy of unlimited air power. Dugan's question of last month—"What is it that psychologically would make an impact on the population and the regime in Iraq?"—was also asked about the German populace in the 1940s. Then and now, a strong public consensus on the purposes of policy (defeat Hitler, restrain Iraq) has the effect of dispensing with a careful scrutiny of the means proposed to prosecute a policy. Ford argued the ends of the policy in the 1940s were justified, but the means were not. The response to Dugan should be the same.

But the debate about means will arise only if war begins. The prior moral question is the legitimacy of using force in the Gulf. I remain convinced that the deployment of U.S., European, and Arab forces, sustained by a series of UN resolutions, is justified politically and morally. One can never make a definitive argument about successful deterrence, but there is good evidence for crediting the deployment as a successful defense of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Since an attack on Saudi Arabia by Iraq would certainly have led to war, a defensive, deterrent deployment of troops was justified.

I am equally convinced that a U.S. decision—devoid of further *major* provocation by Iraq—to use force to liberate Kuwait would be a disproportionate strategy, politically and morally. Proportionality is a difficult criterion to invoke because a definitive cost/benefit balance can never be made. But the lines of an argument against going to war in the Gulf can be sketched.

Three different arguments point to a war with enormous human and political costs involved. First, the *kind* of war needed to drive Iraq from Kuwait: there is no way to avoid a ground war against a large and experienced Iraqi army. The casualties are already being estimated as tens of thousands American and Arab casualties. And the promised dependence on air power —even with moral limits enforced—guarantees high civilian collateral damage. Those who tout a "surgical air war" either don't understand the challenge or are simply being deceptive. This war would be Bismarckian, a war of "blood and iron."

Second, the *scope* of the war threatens to extend far beyond Kuwait and Iraq. The potential war zone runs from Baghdad to Cairo and from the Gulf to the Jordan River, or to the Mediterranean, engulfing both Jordan and Israel. The Middle East is a compact area loaded with sophisticated weaponry, unstable regimes, and historic conflicts that include Arab-Israeli, intra-Arab state, and Palestinian-Arab dimensions. A war could ignite, enkindle, or intensify any and all of these. If fighting begins, there are few who would confidently predict where it will end.

Third, because of this uncertainty, it must be stressed that war undertaken to vindicate state boundaries in the Middle East could end by erasing most of the borders which today define the region. A Gulf war could reshape the Middle East in a fashion similar to World War I in Europe. If that were the outcome, would historical perspective find the initiation of such a war proportional? I believe the answer is no.

Others (Henry Kissinger and Charles Krauthammer) stress the danger to regional and international order if Saddam Hussein is not definitively disciplined and defeated. The point about protecting a principle of order which honors sovereign boundaries is beyond dispute. But the crucial question is to do so with proportionate means. Zbigniew Brzezinski has argued for continuation of the UN-U.S. strategy of "punitive deterrence" of Iraq. It involves long-term multilateral political and economic pressure short of war, and continued deployment of forces to guarantee protection of Iraq's neighbors. Punitive deterrence is proportionate to the threat in the Middle East; war is not. Neither war nor punitive deterrence guarantees success, but Brzezinski has plotted the better course for the United States and the Middle East.

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A CHOICE OF WEAPONS

THE LIMITS OF VIOLENCE, THE MYSTERY OF MERCY

PHILIP P. HALLIE

What follows is a sort of spiritual autobiography. It is a story about a particular person, myself, who has spent more than three decades trying to understand good and evil, not in terms of abstract words, but in terms of facts. Goodness dwells in details, and so does evil, or they dwell nowhere for me. If I have a motto it is William Carlos Williams's "No ideas but in things." And I have found that the way you muster details best is not in triumphant systems or proofs, but in stories, narratives about the actions, passions, and thoughts of particular people in particular times and places. The story I know best, the story I know in greatest detail, is my story. I do not know it perfectly or assuredly, because I have forgotten much of it, and because in the process of telling it I may be fooling myself, even inventing things, for all I know. But I know more details about myself than I know about anyone else, and I just do my best to get the story straight.

What follows is an account of two kinds of goodness that I have encountered in my life—not abstract definitions of goodness, but flesh-and-blood embodiments of it. In this account I do not use the old words like "good" and "evil" very much, because they tempt people to talk abstractly instead of particularly. I use words like "rescue" and "cruelty" instead, because these words usually keep us close to the details of living, and they express very well the life-giving nature of decency and the life-throttling nature of indecency.

There was a time when I thought that rescue meant only one thing: forcible recovery, the use of force to save somebody. And in fact for centuries this has been the meaning of the word. For centuries jurisprudence and black letter law itself have defined "rescue" as the forcible removal of somebody from custody. In novels, in films, even in newspapers strong-arm tactics are usually the only means of rescuing somebody from harm. The hero arrives, or the troops arrive, and they save the victims by making the victimizers bite the dust. The word "rescue" carries with it the high drama of great power saving the innocent.

A couple of decades ago I wrote a book about cruelty that made rescue a matter of sheer power. I believed—and I still believe—that cruelty happens only when one person or group has more power than another person or group, and when the victimizer uses that power to crush and grind the victim. Physical torture happens when somebody or some group has enough power to inflict it. I remember all too clearly the big blond boy who sat upon my belly in the slums of Chicago when I was about ten years old. He was holding me by my shoulders, and he was snapping my head down against the concrete sidewalk near my tenement house. He was chanting, "You damned Jews! You killed Jesus! You killed Jesus! You damned Jews!" Nobody was there to rescue me. Maybe he stopped when my eyes started to glaze, or when he saw the blood from the back of my head on the pavement, but he stopped of his own accord, gave me one slap on the face, and took off. I had an Uncle Louie (sometimes I think that everybody in Chicago had an Uncle Louie) and when he learned about what happened to me, he gave me a brief, terrifying course in street-fighting. Essentially, it consists in striking first, with one unanswerable blow. I became a rather terrifying little monster for my age, and the big blond boys stopped torturing me. He had rescued me from them by empowering me.

During World War II, I was a combat soldier in a vast armed group that rescued many of Germany's victims by defeating Germany. We did not fight the war to rescue them—in fact President Roosevelt was careful not to tie the invasion of Europe into the rescue of Hitler's Jewish and other victims. We invaded Europe for other reasons than rescue, but only by the sheer force of arms did we stop the tortures and murders that were happening across Central Europe.

After the war I wrote a book on cruelty, and after I wrote that book I started to do research on what I perceived to be the cruelest

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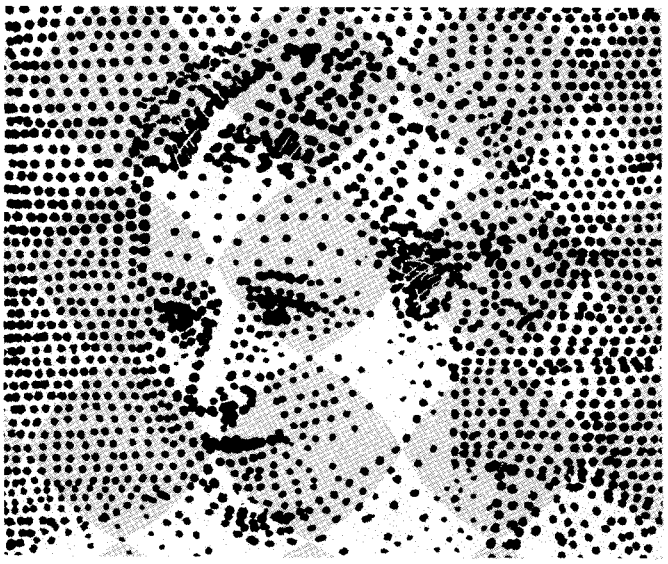
deeds of that whole cruel period: the so-called "medical experiments" on children. Here the imbalance of power between victimizer and victim was vast. On the one hand was an adult German "doctor" in a white coat with the might of Germany behind him, and on the other hand was a little dark child naked on a table that was constructed to carry off her blood. Well, we redressed that imbalance: we rescued the remaining children, and we did it by industrial might and by military skill and courage.

But one day I came across a very brief account of a little village high in the mountains of central France that rescued many refugees from the Germans during their occupation of France. And they rescued them without using military power. For a while I could not believe the story, because it went against all of my experience and all of my research. But when I went to France and met the leaders of the village who were still alive—this was in 1977—I began to understand it, and with that understanding a second notion of rescue started becoming clearer and clearer to me. I learned that rescue is not only a matter of troops and brute force. I learned that it also can be a matter of peaceful, undramatic hospitality. The simple fact is that the villagers of the tiny impoverished village of Le Chambon on the Lignon River took about five thousand people (mostly children) into their homes and saved them from torture, despair, and death.

There is a Danish saying: "If there's room in the heart there's room in the house." Yes, but the saying makes it look a bit too easy. It makes it look as if no courage, no risk, no loss is necessary in order to be hospitable. But the villagers of Le Chambon had to have immense courage, surrounded as they were by the violent auxiliary troops of German occupiers and living as they did amongst French collaborators with the Germans. And they were poor people. Many of them, especially the farmers, could not afford rubber or leather shoes. They had to carve their shoes out of wood from the many trees in the region. Incidentally, the forests in and around Le Chambon helped them to save the children when raids struck the village. The refugees would take the same paths the ancestors of the villagers—the old Huguenots of France—would take when they were hiding from the dragoons of the kings of France. They would follow these paths into the same clearings in the same deep woods that helped save the Huguenots before the French Revolution. In any case, it was no easy matter to rescue those children (and other refugees) during four long years of betrayal, danger, and murder.

But my main point is that it was not physical power, nor physical courage that did it. In Le Chambon there were at least two things that made that rescue possible. The first was the spiritual leadership of the village. Pastor André Trocmé gave inspiring sermons in his ugly gray Temple near the Lignon River, and he turned the village into a rescue-machine driven by a desire to imitate Jesus Christ's love for all mankind. In his sermons and by personal example he taught his fellow villagers to save the refugees not only out of love for the wretched of the earth, but also out of love for the Germans. He taught them to keep the Germans from sinning before God. He brought a supernatural dimension into their lives.



The second element in the rescue was habit, habituation, education. To my mind the most perfect decency in the world is not dramatic, and it is not supernatural. It is habitual. It is so-what-ish. Magda Trocmé would hear a knock on her presbytery door. She would open the door, and there would be a family of refugees, or a pair of children. One of them would ask for help, or they would stand there in silent terror. Magda Trocmé would say, "*Eh bien, naturellement, entrez, entrez.*" And they would enter, sometimes for a few hours, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for months, even years. The thoughts in Magda's mind were thoughts of tactics. They were seldom thoughts about any supernatural demands. Her husband the pastor would take care of that angle. Her contribution came from the habit of being "*toujours prete à servir*," always ready to help.

For more than ten years now I have known Magda Trocmé, the widow of the spiritual leader of the village of Le Chambon, and the more time I have spent with her the clearer it has become to me that for her giving is as natural, and as unnoticed, as breathing is to a person in good health. It is automatic. And so is taking. I have given Magda things, especially since the success of my book on the village, and at first I was surprised and even a bit confused at her taking these gifts for granted; but I have learned that for her, and for the villagers like her, taking was as automatic, as much a matter of course, as giving. The whole business of giving and taking was like breathing out and breathing in, or like passing an apple from one's right hand to one's left hand.

To learn all this was one of the most surprising experiences of my life. I had thought of rescue as dramatic, like my striking back at the blond boys in Chicago, or like the Allies conquering Germany. And André Trocmé's emphasis upon the supernatural, upon following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, was certainly dramatic, though I was never sure I understood it very well. But this "Naturally, come in, come in" business really flabbergasted me. Once, early in my spiritual love affair with Magda Trocmé, I let slip a phrase like, "Oh, that was good of you." She looked at me almost in anger, and she said, "No, no, Philip. No. You do not understand." She and her fellow Chambonnais were not self-conscious do-gooders. She was Magda, and they

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were Chambonnais. They were the particular people they were, doing what came naturally to them.

I am convinced that this is the basic thing that I have learned from the story of Le Chambon. The habit of service, the habit of hospitality, this is what made the mountain village of Le Chambon work for four bitter, dangerous years. Somewhere William James has written that habit is the flywheel of civilization; well, the habit of being ready to help was the flywheel of the rescue-machine of Le Chambon.

What all of this means to me is that habituation is a vital part of moral courage, just as habituation is a vital part of military courage. But the habits are different in the two cases. In military courage the habit of absolute obedience to superiors is essential. But in the kind of moral courage I saw everywhere in the four-year-long story of Le Chambon the habit was the habit of compassion, the habit of taking the suffering of a stranger as a motive for your action, as if it were your own suffering. This is a mystery to me, as it was to Schopenhauer, who founded his rather grim but beautiful ethics upon it. But when it happens it is clearly happening. It is a lucid mystery.

Perhaps it is a mystery because we have been habituated in a thousand ways to be motivated only by our own miseries, needs, desires. Only what protects our own skins motivates us. Such motivations are, for example, played upon by the advertisements we are swimming in these days. "Do you need to lose weight? Do you want to reduce your cholesterol? Do you want the highest tax-free yield for your investment? Buy this, from me. It will save your hide." When we see or hear such things we all know that under this thin veneer of their being kind enough to help us lose weight or get money the advertisers are self-serving. We all are more or less aware that we are living in a public world where kindness is a veneer and the power of self-interest is the solid stuff beneath the veneer.

Perhaps this way of thinking comes to a large extent from our upbringing. Why do we spend so much time drumming penny wisdom into the heads of our children, virtues like thrift and caution? They'll learn how to protect their hides if and when they learn to keep their eyes open and their wits about them. The penny virtues are common-sensical, reasonable, not mysterious. As Natalia Ginzburg urges us, we must teach our young, and even our friends and our very selves, the heart-wisdom of compassion and generosity, the mysterious, life-giving virtues. We must teach these things carefully because they are impractical, sometimes even dangerous. If the mystery of being motivated by the feelings inside somebody else's skin becomes part and parcel of their lives, becomes a casual "Naturally, come in, come in," then there may be more Le Chambons than there are now.

Of course, teaching children such things is far from easy. Mainly you teach the mysterious virtues by example, and your example has to be good and solid. A few weeks ago I was in a kitchen with my grandson, Daniel. It was breakfast time, and I had just filled a bowl with milk and cereal for myself. The bowl was on the kitchen table. Now there are seven cats and a dog in Daniel's home, and he has spent all the three years of his life living close to the floor, at almost eye-level, with these animals. He has also watched with great interest how adults treat these animals. And in his house people are very patient with animals. Well, I had just hugged my grandchild for the first time that morning, when I turned and saw one of the cats put her foot, of all things, right into my carefully prepared cereal. Without thinking—except perhaps a fleeting thought about where the cat's foot had been recently—I seized the cat, picked her up off the table, and threw her down on the kitchen floor. The next thing I knew my grandson was pulling on my bathrobe, and looking up at me with confusion in his eyes. He calls me "Poppie," and we are good playfellows, and so he loves me. But he was torn by what he had just witnessed. And so he stood there, all two-and-a-half feet of him, pulling hard on my bathrobe, looking up at me, and sobbing, "Poppie! Poppie! Poppie!" He still cared for me, but I had violated the household code of forbearance and tenderness for the animals. He was torn. After a few moments he sought out the cat and petted her, still weeping a little. The teachers of heart-virtues need to be virtuous or they are bad teachers.

Mind you, I cannot and I shall not shake off my deep conviction that there is a place for sheer force in this violent world of ours. A dozen Le Chambons would not have stopped or even slowed down the concentration camps of Central Europe. Only the mass killings of the sort that I participated in as a combat artilleryman in the Seventh Army stopped the slaughter of the innocents. If the Allies had not smashed the German armed forces and had not broken the German will to fight, the camps might still be functioning, and children might still be having parts of their bodies cut out without anesthesia. No, I have not forgotten the feeling of that pebbly Chicago pavement on the back of my head and the blood pouring down the back of my neck, and I have not forgotten how I could walk in peace in that neighborhood only after I learned street fighting.

The world is not sentimental. It is rough and surly. Nature is a realm where the predator's food is the prey's death, and so-called civilizations are full of hunger, rage, and indifference. In such a world as ours if love can conquer all, it is only when we give the word "love" a very long and very dubious interpretation. There has to be forcible rescue in this world of ours. The tender mercies of the strong are as dependable as the tender mercies of a hungry lion. I shall never regret fighting against Hitler's Germany.

Still, if this is the only kind of rescue there is, if sheer force is all there is to helping others, then I wonder whether life is worth living. As a philosopher and as a person I am not much concerned with finding "the meaning of life." Such a search is too cognitive, too puritanical, too bloodless for the likes of me. For me the crown of ethics is aesthetics. For me the payoff of living is joy, the richest, and the most enduring joy. This kind of joy is what I have been searching for in my life, a joy that is by no means empty of meaning. And one of the deepest and most enduring joys I have ever known is the joy of learning and telling the story of Le Chambon, just as one of the deepest and most enduring joys of Magda Trocmé's life is the joy she now feels in having helped to live that story. □

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HOW NARROW THE GATE?

THE CAUSE OF FRANZ JAEGERSTAETTER

GORDON C. ZAHN

We are all called to be saints, that much we know. We also know it is not going to be easy. The wealthy young man told to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor failed to pass the test. For many, the concept of sainthood is an outmoded relic of a spiritually unsophisticated past. The miracles attributed to those who have "made it" are written off as products of psychological aberrations (whether of the saints themselves or of superstitious and confused witnesses), and the possibility that manipulation or duplicity sometimes played a part in the formal canonization process—which has not been immune to such factors as wealth, social lobbying, or ecclesiastical position, etc.—have raised further suspicions, not only about the process but about some of those elevated to the altars.

This is not to deny that seemingly extraneous considerations cannot legitimately, be taken into account. Research undertaken more than thirty years ago by Mary Elizabeth Walsh at Catholic University interpreted the lives of a number of canonized saints in terms of the social environment in which they lived. Where unbridled sexual license and promiscuity prevailed, she noted, there was a Maria Goretti willing to give her life in witness to the virtues of purity and virginity. Where lavish and self-indulgent lifestyles flourished, as in thirteenth-century Italy, Francis of Assisi and many of his followers fashioned a way of life devoted to Lady Poverty.

Most sociologists, uncomfortable with the religious implications of Walsh's "spiritual dynamic" explanation, treat canonization and the formal process leading to it as nothing more than an effective vehicle of doctrinal didactic employed by the church for the benefit of the faithful. The traditional criteria of heroic virtue still apply, of course, but they assume an added measure of significance in their contrast with contemporary mores and patterns of behavior in which such virtues are routinely ignored or violated. Either explanation is acceptable; in their differing contexts, both are probably correct.

Formal canonization elevates those honored to the status of models suited to the particular urgencies of a specific time and situation. Thus the effort to promote the canonization of Dorothy Day, for example, combines recognition of personal sanctity with the moral lessons to be learned from her life and works of sacrificial charity.

A problem arises when this purpose is reversed, however, when formal recognition is *denied* an otherwise qualified candidate for canonization because of prudential fears that honoring him or her might "send the wrong message." This seems to be happening in the case of a contemporary martyr, Franz Jaegerstaetter, the Austrian peasant beheaded in Berlin on August 9, 1943 for his refusal to serve in what he was convinced was an unjust war being waged by an immoral regime.

My concern is not purely academic. Having been privileged to "discover" this martyr, I have something of a personal "investment" in his cause for canonization. But until now, for various reasons, I thought it best to distance myself from the campaign being led by Bishop Maximilian Aichern of Linz (Jaegerstaetter's home diocese) and other Austrians. Recent developments, however, have made me abandon that posture to address serious challenges which tend to cast doubt upon the validity of Jaegerstaetter's claim to recognition—and, by inference, my professional integrity.

Most of these challenges can be dismissed easily enough. It has been suggested, for example, that an "uneducated and inarticulate" peasant could not have taken the stand he did, that the arguments attributed to him were "words put into his mouth" after his death. Since those words were taken from letters and statements in his own handwriting, such charges border on malice. True, his simple *Volksschule* education would approximate our fifth-grade level, but it was supplemented by Jaegerstaetter's many hours—especially in the "breaks" he took while working in the fields—spent in studying the Bible, and reading devotional pamphlets and the lives of the saints. His letters and other written testimony make it clear that he committed much of this to memory. As far as being "inarticulate" is concerned, those who knew him as friend and neighbor have testified to his open and frequently voiced denunciations of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich which caused them to marvel that Jaegerstaetter had not been arrested by the Gestapo long before the refusal of military service that cost him his life.

That stubborn opposition has been interpreted by some critics as evidence that Jaegerstaetter's objection was political, not spiritual, and for this reason not meriting canonization. Here, too, documentary evidence, especially the final *apologia* laboriously

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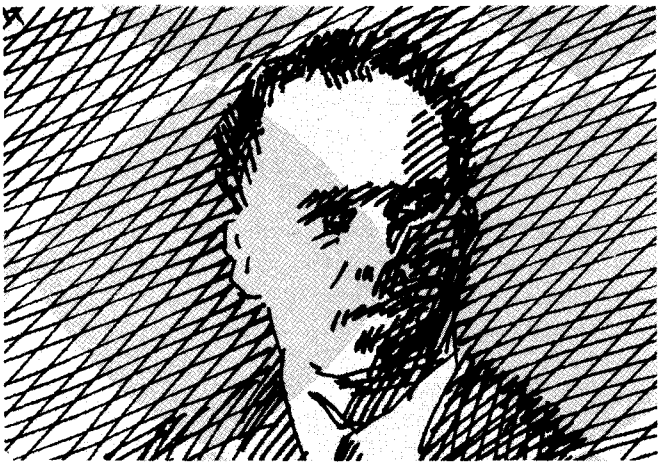

written at the request of a prison chaplain while awaiting execution "with my hands in chains," reveals a depth of spiritual commitment that makes this simple peasant a modern counterpart of Thomas More. Like More's, Jaegerstaetter's refusal had its political dimension, but this should be no surprise. Given the nature of a totalitarian order, any refusal to submit—even with the purest of religious motives—will necessarily have "political" overtones.

There has been resentment voiced on the part of some war veterans and their families to the notice and praise being given to Jaegerstaetter. In 1987 Bishop Aichern was the target of critical telephone calls and letters from Catholics protesting against the three-day diocesan commemoration marking Jaegerstaetter's eightieth birthday. Letters published in the local press (including Catholic papers) objected to such honor being paid to someone who, as the writers saw it, "betrayed" his fellow Austrians who risked their lives on the battlefield. One letter ended with a plea to let Jaegerstaetter rest in peace because "*er hat sein Schicksal verdient*" ("he got what he deserved").

Bishop Aichern recently told me that such animosity has lessened as more concerted efforts to support Jaegerstaetter's canonization have gained strength and acceptance. But this positive development must be balanced by other formidable obstacles that still lie ahead if, or when, the Jaegerstaetter cause is formally presented in Rome. A British report at the time of Pope John Paul II's visit to Mauthausen indicated that, given the pope's practice of acknowledging local heroes on such occasions, plans to honor, perhaps even beatify, Jaegerstaetter had been sidetracked at the last moment. In denying that report, Catholic authorities in Austria claimed that such a possibility had never been considered, that Jaegerstaetter had never been mentioned in the context of the papal visit. The omission, if true, is remarkable in its own right.

Recently I have been told that at the time of the pope's Austrian visit fears had been voiced in higher ecclesiastical circles that honoring Jaegerstaetter's refusal to serve in Hitler's forces might alienate those who did support the war and "drive them from the church." It is troubling to consider that "following orders" in such a war can serve as a political asset (consider Waldheim's election as president), while refusing to do so on moral grounds becomes an embarrassment to responsible leaders of the church.

An even more threatening objection has been raised which, though it ignores the question of the candidate's spiritual commitment or heroic virtue, could carry considerable weight with the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. A 1988 dissertation in canon law published under Gregorian University auspices addresses canonization procedures, particularly diocesan inquiries which are to be made before a cause is submitted for approval. Referring to Jaegerstaetter as a case "under scrutiny" (though it has not, as yet, been formally submitted), the author uses it to illustrate how extraneous factors "such as political or even ecumenical concerns" might enter into "the process of discernment" and "suggest the postponement until such time as particular conditions may permit its advancement." He then goes on to warn that "initiation of such a cause of canonization [Jaegerstaetter's] could potentially go beyond a declaration of the sancity of one individual *to imply a preference for pacifism, which would have serious implications for the just war theory*" [italics added].

This conclusion rests upon a factual misstatement. The dissertation describes Jaegerstaetter as an Austrian "who proclaimed himself to be a total pacifist during his service in the military of World War II Germany." This is untrue. As the author should have known from the source he cites, Jaegerstaetter *had already served* in uniform for at least one, possibly two, tours of military service. The occasion for his later fateful refusal was an order *recalling* him to duty. And the written record clearly states the motive behind this refusal: after completing his previous term of training, Jaegerstaetter had returned to his village and told friends and family he would never go again because putting on the Nazi uniform made him "feel dirty." What he "proclaimed" at the induction center and, later, at his trial before the Supreme Military Tribunal, was the unshakeable moral conviction that as a Catholic he was forbidden to take part in an unjust war and serve an immoral regime that was persecuting his church.

Neither Jaegerstaetter nor others had the slightest doubt as to what the outcome would be. Every spiritual adviser he consulted—local priests, prison chaplains, even his bishop in a personal audience—urged him to consider his family and withdraw his refusal, assuring Jaegerstaetter that responsibility for whatever evil he might be called upon to do would lie with those who gave him the orders. The peasant, however, remained firm in the belief that to violate his conscience would be to evade God's command. And he went to his death with such serenity that the chaplain who accompanied him to the executioner's block declared afterward that he was "the only saint I have known in my life."

There is a touch of irony in Jaegerstaetter's martyrdom. In a sense his refusal could be taken as a model of how the "just war" theory could work if it were taken seriously. True, he probably would not have been able to explain his action in terms of the conditions and principles developed and elaborated upon by learned theologians over the centuries—though these may

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have been mentioned by the bishop in that remarkable audience in which, as that worthy wrote following the war, he had set before the stubborn peasant "all the moral principles defining the degree of responsibility borne by citizens and private individuals for the actions of the civil authority." The fact is, such arguments did not convince Jaegerstaetter. For him, the war was wrong and Hitler and his regime were evil.

As far as the dissertation and its author are concerned, I would ignore the matter were it not for one distressing fact: that the author is himself a member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. No one can reasonably object to carefully weighing plusses and minuses in causes presented for canonization. Every candidacy should be subjected to a rigorous investigation. In Jaegerstaetter's case, assuming all the documentary evidence is given due weight, I am confident that the peasant's martyrdom and the heroic virtue it demonstrated will be acknowledged. But there remains that problem of "implications." Quite apart from the question of whether being a "total pacifist" should be a disqualification, canonizing Jaegerstaetter would imply honoring him as a *conscientious objector*.

There's the rub. Despite the official statements of recent popes, Vatican Council II, and the bishops of the United States, recognizing the legitimacy of conscientious objection for Catholics is still not respected or regarded as "orthodox" by the majority of the faithful in the pews—nor, I fear, of those in the sacristy either. Even so, simple logic should demand that wars which violate the conditions of a "just" war must be "unjust," leaving Christians with the moral obligation to refuse to support them or take part in them. Unfortunately, this connection is seldom made by those responsible for the formation of individual consciences in time of war. John Paul II may have praised conscientious objection as a "sign of maturity" in a Milan talk to young people in 1984, but even he described it as a "problem."

While recognition of Jaegerstaetter's martyrdom should pose no threat to the "just war theory," it might cause that theory to be taken more seriously, challenging the easy acceptance of every nation's expectation of automatic obedience on the part of Catholics called to arms—an expectation all too often fulfilled, as in the case of the German and Austrian bishops instructing the Catholic faithful to "do their Christian duty" in support of "Folk and Fatherland" in World War II. It is true, of course, that if (as I believe) no modern war can meet the theological conditions for a "just war," Jaegerstaetter's canonization could create a troublesome model for young people called to service in any future war.

At another level, the issue goes beyond the injustice of denying this heroic man an honor he rightfully earned. Many Christians are convinced Jaegerstaetter already enjoys his reward in that "community of saints" to which he so fervently aspired. Formal canonization can add nothing to those joys. Nevertheless, to deny him—or anyone—canonization simply to avoid possible misinterpretations and to shield long-held (but increasingly irrelevant) religious traditions or practices would represent a scandalous abuse of ecclesiastical authority and make a mockery of the canonization process itself. □

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RETURN FROM THE WILDERNESS

LETTING GO OF VENGEANCE

JANE LEWIS ENGELKE

THE LADY & THE LIFE OF FAITH

My world ended on August 4, 1984. On what promised to be one of those perfect summer days, my eighteen-year-old-son Thomas, the youngest of our five children, was driving his girlfriend home from a day at the beach. Both were to return to our home later for supper and a video movie. At four in the afternoon a repeat offending drunk driver crashed through the door of Thomas's car and our lives. Thomas was killed instantly and Lisa injured. The news pushed me off the edge of the earth into a great abyss. Nothing was familiar, there were no landmarks to guide me, no previous experience to which I could relate. I felt isolated and abandoned by God. That excruciatingly painful event initiated what I have come to call my "wilderness experience," a crisis situation that produced challenge, temptation, and a redefinition of my identity in relation to God and others. With Jesus I had been led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

I thought back on the God of my youth as a child growing up in the Bronx, the God that my mother and my Ursuline and Dominican teachers had assured me would always be with me. I had experienced the presence of this God in my later years as a nurse, and as a Navy wife traveling about the country, frequently uprooted but never alone. I had been comforted in times of stress such as the loss of our home to fire and in periods of serious illness. In my most recent experiences caring for the elderly, the infirm, and the terminally ill as a public health nurse I never doubted this presence. I was confident of a deep and personal relationship with God, perhaps I may even have been proud of it. Now when I so desperately needed that assurance and presence, God seemed absent. I felt lost. Was God, like the woman of the parable searching for the lost coin, searching for me? I could not even bring myself to cry out, "Here I am." Prayer was impossible.

When I would try to think of God or pray the only words that would race through my head were those of the nursery rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty." Faster and faster the words would come, one tumbling into the other. It described me; it described Thomas. Both of us were broken and beyond help. At some point, I shared this with a priest friend and he suggested that I make "Humpty Dumpty" my prayer. I did and it became my lament. Strangely, one early spring day as I prayed my prayer of brokenness I became aware in my mind and heart that the rhyme was true but incomplete. "All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again," but God, who was King, could and would make the difference. This was what the Resurrection was about, this was the promise. I had come to the first light in the darkness, the first landmark in the wilderness. I had not despaired and I was not alone.

Although this realization was the beginning, it was not an end to the wandering. In reality it marked the time when the numbness subsided and I came face to face with the anger and pain that I had previously been unable to face.

It was months after Thomas's death before I fully realized that the criminal action of another had killed him. New and unfamiliar feelings welled up in me. Anger bordering on rage consumed me. I faced a new dilemma. How do I respond to these feelings as a Christian? Some were quick to admonish that I forgive. Others said nothing and patiently listened to my ravings and expressions of confusion while others distanced themselves from my company or changed the subject. It seemed such a burden to be Christian when I was psychologically more disposed to Old Testament justice. Forgiveness, which had never been a problem for me in the past, was now a stumbling block in my spiritual life. It weighed heavily on me and I sought answers in prayer, the Bible, and numerous Christian and secular readings. Friends spoke to me of how strong I was and how fortunate I was to have my faith. I was embarrassed to confess that I was weak, confused, angry, and doubting.

Just before the sentencing of the person who had killed Thomas, my husband and I traveled to Haiti. It was to be a retreat of sorts but also an opportunity to see how the truck purchased with the donations to a fund in Thomas's memory was being utilized. As we rode over the rocky roads bringing medical and food supplies to a remote region in the mountains outside of Port-au-Prince, I wished with all my heart that I was somewhere else, not riding a truck purchased at so great a price. As the school children ran to greet the truck and entertained us with their songs, I became for a brief moment in touch with another suffering that was the result of injustice. In this beautiful and poorest of lands, I was blessed with an insight which brought me to another level on my journey. Looking into the eyes of the poorest of the poor, I had come to realize that the world was incapable of justice and that our attempts were so inadequate. Although we are never excused from trying

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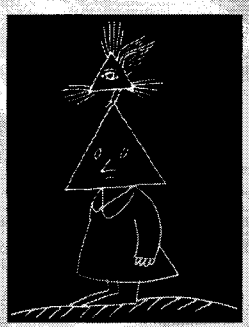
to create a more just world, I realized that only God could bring perfect justice. This translated into my realization that the justice which I desired could not be done. The scales could not be balanced. Thomas could not be returned to us, and as angry as I was, I did not in any way want the destruction of the one who took his life. In acknowledging my anger as just, I became aware and comfortable with the fact that punishment of the offender was essential. A just sentence would serve as a vindication in the Christian sense, a raising up of Thomas's life as sacred and of value. It was not an act of vengeance. The ultimate vindication was for God to perform. I had to let go, and in the letting go a strange and new thing happened. I found I was now able to pray for the offender and have continued to do so in the years that followed. Perhaps some would argue that this is not forgiveness in the purest, fullest sense. But it is the best that I can do at this time. The rest I give to God. It allows me to pray the prayer of Jesus: "Abba, forgive him, he knew not what he did."

One year after Thomas's death, I entered Yale Divinity School, to which I had already been accepted. When I applied I had hoped to utilize my education in chaplaincy work or as a member of a pastoral team. Along with commuting and studying, I had made a commitment to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and over the years that commitment grew. In addition to believing that I needed to do something to bring an end to tragedies of this nature, the work served as a natural and positive outlet for my grief.

The work demanded a great deal of time. As legislative liaison for MADD Connecticut, my trips to the capitol and testimony before committees became more frequent as we pushed for the enactment of numerous laws, hoping that stronger legislation would cause a change in public attitudes and recognition of DWI as a crime that causes unbelievable suffering for the victims. The process is slow and sometimes frustrating. As with other crimes such as rape and domestic violence that were at one time tolerated by society, public attitudes toward drunk and impaired driving are also changing.

But since laws alone cannot change public attitudes, I and other members of MADD often speak in schools, before civic groups and senior citizens organizations. In a new effort to reduce recidivism, victims—including those who have lost children, spouses, and siblings—are addressing offenders in a nonaccusatory manner, telling the stories of what drunk driving has done to their lives. This helps offenders to understand better the enormous consequences of a crime which often involves a stranger and is frequently not remembered.

Now as I reflect on my involvement with MADD, I am reminded of a banner I once made with my children while teaching CCD: "Bloom Where You Are Planted." I had been led into the wilderness and challenged to bloom there. In my present efforts, especially as they pertain to victim advocacy and assistance, my religious education and experience are invaluable. I am able to bring a different perspective to the work of victim assistance regardless of the religious denomination of the person. I understand the pain, anger, and alienation experienced at the sudden violent death of a loved one at the hands of another. I do not become offended or feel I must be a defense attorney



In 1987, Commonweal published a series of articles by lay people who described their personal experience of faith in the work place. We received such positive response to the series that we decided to continue it. We have asked each individual: How is your Catholic faith manifest in your daily life and work? How has faith shaped your choices: vocational, financial, ethical; and vice versa? Where do you find spiritual strength and guidance?

Our seventh installment in the series is by Jane Lewis Engelke. Mrs. Engelke lives in Ledyard, Connecticut, and is president of Eastern Connecticut Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

for God and Christian virtue when people express outrage and anger at God or the perpetrator. I am not put off by statements desiring vengeance. I understand the process and the numerous burdens placed on these people, as they try to sift out some reasonable compromises with which they can live. I have experienced many of these demons and know the devastation that they cause to body and spirit. I have experienced the strain the criminal justice system places upon victims and the depersonalization of it that frequently results in a second victimization. I understand the unfocused and sometimes irrational anger toward everyone, the offender, the system, themselves, and especially a society that remains so complacent and so reluctant to change and see this killing for what it truly is.

Here in my work with victims, I meet the lonely and the frightened, those who have become prisoners behind invisible bars, some confined to wheel chairs, others to bed. Parents and spouses whose lives are turned upside down trying to care for a child or spouse with spinal cord or traumatic brain injury. Others are secondary survivors whose child, spouse, brother, sister, or parent were killed. Sadly on occasion I find myself with someone who has lost an entire family. All of these people are traumatized to varying degrees. Some have sleep disorders, others are afraid to drive or leave their home, some suffer from anxiety attacks and grief spasms that threaten to overwhelm them like a tidal wave.

More and more as I look about at the victims of the innumerable crimes that people commit against one another I ask: Who helps them deal with the anger that may even be vengeful? Does the church offer prayers, retreats, and specially trained counselors for this work or does it only hold out the ideal of forgiveness with no guidance or practical way to attain it? It's true that this may take time, perhaps years, but aren't these people as deserving of this time and concern

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as the offender? Yet, it seems that for the most part victims of crime are left to find their way and work out their grief and anger in secular support groups like MADD, Parents of Murdered Children, Survivors of Homicide, and rape, incest and battered women support groups, with little spiritual guidance, except the appearance of a clergyperson for a memorial service. While these groups are good and necessary, they become for many the community of nurture and support, and the church community one of secondary importance. As I see it, this is where the church should be.

Occasionally someone will ask if I am disappointed not to be doing ministry. At first I would have answered yes; but upon further reflection I see what I do as ministry, especially when I am working with victims. I base my answer on the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is the story of a victim of a crime, the failure of two to care, and the ministry of one who did. It serves for me as an imperative to minister to victims.

It saddens me that the institutional church has fallen short in its ministry to victims, not because of a lack of charity but more from a lack of knowledge of the devastation that criminal victimization produces and the burden that the criminal justice system places on the victim. The President's Task Force on Victims of Crime recognized this failure in ministry to victims of crime. The report urges church communities to become involved so that the spiritual wounds may be healed as well as the physical and psychological injury. It states: "All too often, representatives from religious communities come to court only to comfort, support, and assist the accused. This is indeed a noble endeavor, and this Task Force would not seek to discourage it. However, what we do seek, here as elsewhere, is a balance, a recognition that the victim certainly no less than the victimizer is in need of aid, comfort, and spiritual ministry." At another point it states: "Seminary and in-service training that addresses the victim's needs is as necessary for the minister as it is for the doctor, the lawyer, or the psychologist."

The message of the Good Samaritan parable is a message for all, not just a few. It calls for a commitment of time and talent to the healing of victims of crime. The Good Samaritan—a model for this ministry—was not satisfied to just bind up the wounds but initiated a plan for a continuing ministry. "Take care of him, and whatever you spend I will repay you when I come back" (Luke 10:35).

The church's commitment to this ministry will allow victims of crime to experience, as Jesus did, the ministrations of angels and spiritual healing. This will open a way out of the wilderness and the vision to see the flowers that bloom there as new worlds are created. □

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SCREEN

A CONJURER FALTERS

KUROSAWA'S 'DREAMS'

Sometimes even wizards weary of magic. The wizard in question is Akira Kurosawa, and his latest magical conjuring act is *Dreams*. It's an episodic film that, in its first five sequences, fires up Kurosawa's admirers and justifies all the love we have ever felt for him. And then the last three "dreams" turn us into ingrates demanding more from a master who has already given us so much.

The first two sequences are like amazing picture books that make adults gasp as they try to read them to their kids. They are tranquil yet somewhat frightening visions, visions of children in touch with invisible forces. The beauty of these episodes resides in each mysterious, quiescent shot and not (as is usual with Kurosawa) from the linkage of dynamic images through editing. Here, whenever the director cuts to the next shot, it's as if he were forcing us to turn the page and get on with the story. We don't want to. We protest. But then we are gripped by the next picture.

"Sunshine Through the Rain" describes the weather in which, as a mother tells her little boy, foxes get married. But, she warns, no human may attend such rites. Nevertheless, the child runs off to a nearby forest to do just that. The foxes are played by masked dancers, and the wedding march is a choreographed procession both comic and scary, full of slow walking, sudden freezes, head jerks, paranoid stares. It's like one of those creepy visions we've all had in childhood that we never dare to speak of to our parents for fear that they will somehow blame us, as if witnessing the uncanny were a secret vice.

And when this child runs home after the foxes spot him, his mother *does* blame him. She knows all about it because the foxes have sent an emissary. Unless the foxes forgive him, the boy must kill himself. She even hands him the dagger with which to commit *seppuku*. The boy runs off to beg forgiveness of the animals. Is the rest of the movie a series of visions this boy had on his way to find the foxes? Or do the subsequent dreams constitute the foxes' curse on the boy for his spying? Or their reward for his contrition? Or are they simply the visions that inevitably attend the sort of boy who witnesses the marriage of the foxes? In any case, the vision this boy has in the next story, "Peach Orchard," has a happy outcome: seeing the spirits of some peach trees uprooted by his parents, the child pleads for, and wins, their forgiveness. One shot—a full view of the tree ghosts standing in hierarchical order on rising shelves of grassland—just might be somewhere in my consciousness on the very last day of my life.

For these opening sequences, Kurosawa, a major artist, has knowingly made himself into a minor artist in order to provide the sort of joy that only great minor artists like Borges or Walter

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De La Mare can give us: tantalizing peeks into the outskirts of consciousness. This doesn't represent a decline in his artistry but a severe, deliberate narrowing, as if Victor Hugo had turned himself into Maurice Sendak.

In the next episode, "Blizzard," Kurosawa, creator of epic adventure stories and poet of strenuous action, is back; but this time the adventurous undertaking at hand seems to be in its death throes, and the action, however strenuous, is severely constricted. Mountaineers cross a snowy waste during a storm. For a while, the camera is stationary while each man moves, each step a struggle, from screen right to screen left. It seems to take forever, not because we are bored but because we are sharing their heavy-footed agony. To sink into the surrounding whiteness is to die. Yet what a relief it would be to surrender. The leader, the only one who refuses to give up, is visited by a snow demon in the shape of a beautiful woman. She first tires to coax him into deathly sleep, then tries to smother him when he resists. As she does so, Kurosawa gives us about half a dozen quick close-ups of her face and, without greatly varying the angle of each shot, slightly alters her make-up and facial expression so that over the curse of a few seconds she changes from seductive beauty to malefic witch. Here is cinematic modulation of the subtlest order.

"The Tunnel" is both primal and complex. Out of a pitch-black tunnel comes a regiment of slaughtered men, their faces made up like aggrieved clowns. Their officer, the company's sole survivor, pleads with them to forgive him and to return to the shades. He says he could blame the war for their destruction but that would be too easy. He blames himself. But why? What blunders has he committed? Kurosawa provides no explanation and is right not to do so. Quite possibly this officer led his men to the best of his ability, but the tug of the dead, absurdly slain, upon the living, absurdly spared, cannot be rationalized. The images of this episode are vivid but it is the sounds that haunt me: the pounding of the soldiers' feet in the tunnel's gloom, the snarling of a Cerberus-like dog; the shouted commands of the officer as he agonizingly, lovingly drives his men back into darkness.

"Crows" is Kurosawa's tribute to Vincent van Gogh. A student literally walks into the world of the Dutch artist's canvasses. And he meets the artist himself played by—brace yourself—Martin Scorsese, complete with Brooklyn accent. This episode is—sometimes by turns and sometimes all at once—silly, embarrassing, delightful. And the last shot of crows rising over a wheatfield, though copied from van Gogh, is, in its fury of movement, pure Kurosawa.

And then the letdown. All three of the final episodes have the same fault: Kurosawa, thinking he has something to say with words rather than with image and action, has one character in each story talk on and on, informing the other characters, and through them the audience, of the follies of our over-mechanized, nuclear age. And in each episode, the director achieves one startling image that exposes the artistic poverty of everything else in the sequence. In "Mount Fuji in Red," it is the sight of an explosion caused by three nuclear reactors malfunctioning. Since this single sight delivers the essence of calamity, the fol-

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lowing denunciatory speech (spoken by a repentant scientist) would be unnecessary even if it were well written. Which it is not.

Our post-doomsday fears are incarnated in the very sight of "The Weeping Demon" of the next segment, but then the mutant gets to deliver his own antinuke speech. In "The Village of Windmills," a saintly and incredibly boring centenarian lectures a shiny-eyed student (the little boy of the first episodes now grown) on the Good Life being achievable only in a village like his where windmills produce the power and nobody watches TV. "People have forgotten they are a part of nature....Why do they make inventions which always make people unhappy?" I felt like retorting, "Oh, yeah? You mean inventions like the movie camera?" But perhaps that's one invention that the old geezer would allow since Kurosawa's is fixed on him with such paralyzingly dog-like devotion.

Like the aging Tolstoy forsaking his fiction for the role of moral philosopher, Kurosawa, at the very end of his career, subdues his art to preachment. Like the Russian master, the Japanese master thinks he has something to say about life after he has rendered life itself through the magic of his art. But, on the other hand, would you care to mention another living film director whose name could be linked with Tolstoy's in the same carping breath?

RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

A CRITIQUE OF GOD'S PLAY

'THE PUPPETMASTER OF LODZ'

The Puppetmaster of Lodz is an intriguing play. It was written by Gilles Segal, a Romanian-born French playwright, actor, and mime, and has been translated by Sara O'Connor, managing director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, where it had its American premiere. It is now playing at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia in a generally effective staging by Paul Berman with Bill Raymond as the titular protagonist.

Set in Berlin in 1950, it takes us into the tortured mind of Samuel Finkelbaum, puppetmaster and survivor of Birkenau. Having escaped from the camp shortly before the end of the war, he has taken refuge in a room rented him by an accommodating landlady (the characters are not to be taken as realistic), where he persists (or pretends to persist) in the conviction that the war has not ended and where he spends his time working on *The Tragicomic Life of Samuel Finkelbaum, Puppetmaster*, the play with which he plans to astound the world when the war *really* ends. He shares the room with a life-size puppet—the wife who died in Birkenau—with hand puppets that represent him and her and a small galley of other figures, and with string puppets for the prisoners in the camp. Much of the business with the puppets is funny, as are the exchanges with the concierge (I cannot imagine why in so idiomatic a translation O'Connor kept the French word), and the visitors she brings to his door in an attempt to convince him that the war is over. There is a note of desperation in the comedy—in Finkelbaum's attempts to speak quietly, rationally, and in his wryness—for he is a man driven to relive his story and to try to rewrite it in the process. He survived presumably because he was one of the men who carried the bodies of the dead to the crematorium, and we are given the scene—with puppets—in which he finds his wife among the dead and, after the immediate reaction of horror, carries her to the fire. He then kills himself in a false theatrical gesture, doing as a puppet what he thinks he should have done in reality, trying to give his story an ending that is suitably tragic. He did not kill himself and he did not go mad—as he thinks he would have had there been a God.

Finkelbaum's quarrel with God—competition with God—is one of the underlying themes of the play. In a comic puppet rendition of his wedding, in which the puppet Samuel is equipped with a drawstring that can give him an erection, his sexuality rebels against the occasion. Not wanting to be part of a spiritual *ménage à trois*—Samuel, his bride, and God—he carries the astonished young woman away, but (so he tells us: this scene is not enacted), after a chase, he returns to the synagogue and the service. If he ostensibly lets God back into what he sees as a solely human union, he loses him again in the camps. He rejects God as creator on the assumption that he is jealous of Finkelbaum, who as puppetmaster is a creator who makes the figures and controls their actions. In the world of this room, Finkelbaum re-creates himself and those around him, and keeps alive his guilt and his pain.

At the end of the play, Schwartzkopf, the man who escaped Birkenau with Finkelbaum, turns up, having answered the landlady's advertisement, to assure Finkelbaum that the war is over and to persuade him to come to Antwerp. Finkelbaum agrees, puts his life-size puppet to bed for the last time, begins to destroy the others, but stops with a small puppet of his wife. He cannot drop her into the stove this time, and he sings that he will be with her always, dancing a little step that recalls the ball scene which he invented as the place they first met. The life-size puppet at the back of the stage rises from the bed, its wig comes off, and this shaved head evocation of the camps reminds us that all of Finkelbaum's re-creations of his dead wife have given her the rich head of hair she had when they met. He has returned to the enclosed world of the room where he can continue to reinvent his past and let his survivor's suffering survive. At this point Schwartzkopf comes back with the train tickets, but he joins in the repeated "always" and, when the landlady knocks again to remind them that the war is over, it is Schwartzkopf who says, "So they say, so they say," echoing Finkelbaum's words from the beginning of the play. Not only is the war not over for Finkelbaum, but it is not over for any of the participants. At a time when the newspapers are full of the reappearance of anti-Semitism in Russia, in France, even in Madison, Wisconsin, this ending is particularly appropriate.

My detailed account of the play has slighted the performance. Bill Raymond, a veteran of Mabou Mines, is a fine Finkelbaum. He commands the stage from the first moment, creating—with

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a gesture, a look, an intonation—a tragic figure who was meant to be a comedian. The other star of the evening is Robert Smythe, who designed the puppets and directed their use. There were a few awkward moments, particularly when the large puppet had to be put in place, but for the most part Raymond handled the puppets as though he had grown up in the trade, which he had not. The best images in the play come out of the puppets, and they are the horrifying rather than the comic ones. When Finkelbaum begins to discard his puppets, the stove into which he feeds them becomes the camp crematorium. The cold precision with which he cuts the strings of the prisoners, letting the puppets crumple to the floor, makes the mass deaths more vivid than any human depiction could do on stage. And best of all, when Samuel at last parts with his life-size wife, Raymond holds the puppet in his arms, exactly reproducing the stance of the puppet Samuel holding the small version of the wife in the moment of hesitation before he consigned her to the fire.

There were things to carp about in the play—a subplot that never really seemed to belong—but *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* was a strong way to begin the new theatrical season, even if the beginning was not in New York. GERALD WEALES

Beth Houston

Lullaby

When the smoldering moon
is tossing and turning
in violent clouds, you wake
on panting bedsprings
in a sweat, cold to the bone,
a voice conjuring the ghost
not of something dead
but too alive.

The branch against the window
is the struck match
that set my body on fire—
October, my birth
and eclipse. From the wings
of a dark owl I watch you
look out to nothing
but leaves of ash, cold
as wind, but reach in,
and your hand burns.

I beckon you
to the closet of mice.
Untie the ribbons of dust,
the spells of blood
I wrote to haunt you.
Lock the door, brush
the ash from your hands.
Now you can sleep.

Settle down
in your lacy gown—
the one I gave you.
In your breathing
I embody the question
I have come to answer,
in the shadow who rises
and walks in her dreams,
who twists the cold doorknob,
calling my name.

Charles W. Pratt

November: Sparing the Old Apples

Cracked urns of air, broken-winged umbrellas,
Black seabirds drying angular wings on a rock—
One with a hole through its trunk, another half-withered
As if it had suffered a paralytic stroke—
I should cut them down, the orchard textbooks tell me,
As a developer clearcuts tenements block by block,
And put in semidwarfs like his high-rent condominiums:
More apples the acre, easier to prune, spray, pick.

There they stand, fixed in impossible postures,
Like fugitives turned to stone for looking back
One last time at the place they must leave forever,
Or lords of an *ancien régime* condemned to the axe.

And I put my chainsaw away for another November
As if having endured conveyed some right to endure.

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The indelible memory of the Warsaw ghetto

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Edited by Anthony Polonsky
Routledge, $25.00, 242 pp.

Michael T. Kaufman

In January of 1987 *Tygodnik Powczechny*, the influential Polish Catholic weekly, published an article by Jan Blonski, an eminent literary critic and historian, under the headline, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto." The title alludes to a poem by Czeslaw Milosz written in 1943 as the Nazis were decimating and razing the Warsaw ghetto. In that poem, he portrayed the destruction as an overture to universal apocalypse, and evoked the image of a mole with the countenance of a Jewish patriarch who, burrowing beneath the rubble, would find him, "a Jew of the New Testament." In dread, Milosz imagines this divine and judgmental creature seeing in his uncircumcised body the sign of his own complicity.

Blonski's article took the poetic and mystical burden of Milosz's poem and made it plain, asking questions that, judging by the response that poured into *Tygodnik Powczechny*, seared Polish souls and psyches. What, Blonski asked, were the moral obligations of Poles in the face of the Holocaust that took place on their soil? Admittedly they were weak and limited in their potential response to the Nazis, but in their presence, the Jews, who had become a modern nation primarily within historic Poland, were destroyed. Moreover, he continued, what were the contemporary obligations of Poles to confront the fact that powerless or not, they witnessed and survived the extermination of an even weaker people who had lived in their midst in greater numbers and with greater involvement than anywhere else in the world?

Blonski began his soul-shaking argument by explaining exactly what it was that Milosz meant when he describes his native soil as "bloodstained, sullied, desecrated." What Milosz means here is neither the blood of his compatriots nor that of the Germans. He clearly means Jewish blood, the genocide which—although not perpetrated by the Polish nation—took place on Polish soil and which has tainted that soil for all time. That collective memory which finds its purest voice in poetry and literature cannot forget this bloody and hideous defilement. It cannot pretend that it never occurred. Occasionally one hears voices, especially among the young, who were not emotionally involved in the tragedy, saying: 'We reject the notion of collective responsibility. We do not have to return to the irrevocable past. It is enough if we condemn this crime *in toto* as we do with any injustice, any act of violence.' What I say to them is this: 'Our country is not a hotel in which one launders the linen after the guests have departed. It is a home which is built above all of memory; memory is at the core of our identity. We cannot dispose of it at will, even though as individuals we are not directly responsible for the actions of the past. We must carry it within us even though it is unpleasant or painful. We must also strive to expiate it.'"

I was living in Warsaw in 1987 when Blonski's article first appeared. For me—by Milosz's categories a Jew of the Old Testament—it was a thunderbolt. The long unspoken had been uttered: Jews who lived among us, were killed in front of us and that fact demands that we, Poles, learn and testify how exactly they had lived and how they had died, how we treated them when they were a presence in our national life and how we acted when they were being destroyed.

What struck me was that in framing his argument Blonski avoided legalistic or pragmatic maneuvering. His essay was no apology written to appease the survivors, hardly any of whom lived in Poland. Neither was it an attempt to show how some other behavior might have saved so and so many Jewish lives. No, this was an affirmation of the awesome event, an exorcism meant to slay ghosts and cleanse the national spirit at a time when Poland was standing at the brink of a political rebirth. National honor was being linked not to the guilt of complicity but to the unavoidable shame of impotence and the far more avoidable silence and self-deception that had followed.

Within Polish intellectual circles Blonski's article set off a passionate and reverberating debate. Over the months that followed its appearance, *Tygodnik Powczechny* published more than a dozen responses and rebuttals. Now, along with a few other short essays published in other Polish journals, the whole debate has been translated and edited by Antony Polonsky, professor at the London School of Economics and the president of the Institute of Polish Jewish Studies. It is a remarkable collection, a rare example of a cathartic exploration of national honor and shame.

Beyond Blonski's initial taboo-breaking essay, the most important article in the collection was written by Wladyslaw Sila-Nowicki. "A Reply to Jan Blonski" is an article of, at times, swaggering stupidity, colossal insensitivity, and jingoistic defensiveness. And yet with Blonski, it frames the debate and defines the field for all the other testimony. Sila-Nowicki is a genuine patriot, a man who headed armed fighters against Nazi and Communist occupiers and spent many years in a Communist prison under sentence of death. With such a record of sacrifice, he commands attention and respect even for this folly.

He begins by accusing Blonski of play-

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ing into the hands of Poland's enemies and he upbraids the Catholic weekly for lending its credibility to anti-Polish propaganda. He disputes the analysis of Milosz's poem. He then goes on to catalogue the familiar, and not entirely inaccurate, selection of facts with which so many Poles defined their relationship to Jews—before, during, and after the Holocaust. For centuries, when they were expelled elsewhere, Jews settled in Poland and their numbers increased remarkably. Before 1939, Jews dominated certain professions and controlled a disproportionate amount of wealth. During the war no European nation did more to assist Jews than Poland where the risk for such assistance was the greatest, the normal penalty being execution. Polish suffering in the war was enormous, second only to that of the Jews. There were no Quislings in Poland; the Polish underground sentenced to death those who betrayed Jews to the Nazis.

Sila-Nowicki includes other, more debatable points: he claims that the prewar quotas on university admissions for Jews was justified. "For me it is natural that society defends itself against numerical domination of its intelligentsia," he writes, suggesting that Jews were not and ought not to have been of that society. He also claims that it was the passivity of the Jews more than anything that led to their destruction; habits of accommodation, presumably different from those of rebellious Catholic Poles, led them to go to their deaths offering no resistance. A number of other writers in the collection point out that this stereotypic view is, among other things, historically baseless. Finally, Sila-Nowicki includes this bizarre and inexplicable passage: "It is even possible to prove in the most scientific manner that in their veins flows only one percent of the blood of those people who shouted 'Hosanna to the Son of David' and then 'Crucify Him, Crucify Him!' but their nation continues to exist."

I don't know what he means, but I don't have to understand such words to fear them. Still, and ultimately, I am grateful to Sila-Nowicki. His voice asking—What stains? What complicity? What selective forgetfulness or acquiescence with evil?—makes Milosz's poem even less abstract. I am also grateful that by writing this brief for the defense, Sila-Nowicki, an eminent lawyer, opened the way for many Polish men and women to directly and honorably challenge his general argument as well as his specific claims of Jewish passivity and Jewish threats to Polish society.

Among the most inspiring of these responses is "Do Not Speak for Me." Its author, Kazimierz Dziewanowski, was in 1987 a journalist associated with Solidarity. Today he is the Polish ambassador to the United States. Disputing most of the points made by Sila-Nowicki, he also criticizes the lawyer's tone. "If in our country, in our presence, and in front of our eyes, several million innocent people were murdered and we were not able to prevent it and save them, this is an event so terrible, a tragedy so enormous, that it is only understandable, human, and proper that those who survived are somehow troubled, disturbed, and cannot find peace. This is why the calmness and good feeling demonstrated by the author of the article who is arguing with Blonski does not satisfy me." □

MASTERFUL & DISHEARTENING

MY TRAITOR'S HEART
Rian Malan
The Atlantic Monthly Press, $19.95, 349 pp.

David Holahan

Author Rian Malan is drinking with Mike, a black friend, and several black strangers early one morning in a Soweto shebeen when the subject of violent revolution comes up. Having recently returned from eight years of self-imposed exile from his South African homeland, Malan's dilemma is manifest: "On the one hand, I was white, and dreaded the day when all hell broke loose. On the other, I wasn't prepared to say so. I was still pretending to be the Just White Man, and just white men were obliged to endorse the righteousness of violent revolution."

Mike, sensing that the author's endorsement of black revolution was a wee bit too enthusiastic, informs the gathering that his white friend is a Malan, of the infamous Afrikaner Malans, who had led the white tribe for centuries in battles against the black tribes. The table falls silent. Later that night, after more drinks, Malan and Mike have a spat while drinking with Judo, a one-eyed black man with no shoes. The author bolts into the Soweto streets alone, intent on finding his car and leaving. He quickly regrets his decision: "The night was as silent as outer space. I was walking on the moon. All I could hear was the drumming of blood in my ears, and the rasp of my own breathing. I was out of my mind with terror, and in that moment, it came to me: This was *it*—the unseen force that obliterated reason in South Africa; the force that held the white tribe together, and kept our sweating white fists locked in a death grip on the levers of power."

This is a masterful and disheartening work, for the most part a chronicle of South Africans murdering South Africans, whites killing blacks, blacks killing whites, blacks killing blacks. Malan traces the history of all this slaughter from the time of Jacques Malan, a Huguenot who fled Louis XIV's France in 1688 and wound up in the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. His descendent, Rian Malan, a journalist, has decided to return to his homeland to look for answers, to search out slivers of hope in the present.

Instead he finds stories like that of Simon Mpungose, the Hammerman, who dispatches whites with an ordinary claw hammer while they sleep. Simon, a Zulu, has been ground down by South Africa. Orphaned, abused, and despondent, he tries hanging himself but fails. In jail for burglary, he breaks white rocks with a hammer day after day. One night he has a dream, a vision of his persecutor, who has a head just like a white rock. After he kills this person, he is taken away, put to

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death and is free from his torment.

South Africa is a country where all dreams are nightmares, or turn into them in time. Simon actually lives out his terrible vision after his release from prison (a release, by the way, that he resists, knowing what his destiny is). Whites have their own visions dancing in their heads: "The Hammerman's killings raise the specter of indiscriminate black retribution; they force whites to examine their lives, and the structure of their society, and when whites do so, they see that they cannot escape complicity. That quickens the fear into a fever. They hear the Hammerman rustling in the garden; they see him lurking in the bushes; they hear his footsteps on the path; his shadow falls across the curtain. The police are inundated with false alarms."

South Africa in 1986 is a place where an eye for an eye still reigns supreme and Malan is trying to find out why and how long it will go on this way. He provides little cause for optimism. At one point he quotes from the speeches of former South African President Pieter Botha and from Winnie Mandela. Ms. Mandela proclaims, "The Soviet Union is a torchbearer for all our hopes and aspirations." Malan concludes, "The time has come to make choices, but there were no rational choices at all." Malan's dilemma is that he is in the middle, with no place and no one to turn to. In South Africa, the middle is a very dangerous place to be.

Today, with Botha replaced by F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela free from prison, Malan might be somewhat more positive about his country's future. In fact, he ends his book with a story, a redemptive account that reads like a parable. Neil Alcock is a white man who gives up his life as a prosperous farmer—and eventually his life—to confront Africa, near a place where the human race is thought to have first begun to people the earth. Alcock and his wife live on the most remote farm in white South Africa, just across the river from Zulu country. It is a land whose problems cannot all be blamed on apartheid. Tribal disputes have left much of the best agricultural land in limbo and periodic wars flair between Zulu subtribes.

Alcock's dream is to help the Africans nurture their over-grazed dusty land back to health and productivity. He is foiled by both man and the elements, dying at the hands of the people he is trying to help during a tribal battle. And yet Neil Alcock's death is not without meaning. He left the African frontier a little better than he found it and showed the Zulus, who mourned him with tribal ritual, the face of a Just White Man. Malan calls him the first white man to come home to Africa to stay.

Malan himself has decided to stay and confront Africa, a land of no guarantees, a place where everyone is wondering when the Great Terror will finally erupt. Milan thought a little terror was about to befall him that early morning he was walking the streets of Soweto: "And then a hand tapped my shoulder. I spun around and discovered that the werewolves were phantasms inside my brain. One-eyed Judo was padding along beside me in his bare feet, smiling cheerfully, accompanied by a teenage boy....'It is not safe for you here,' said Judo. 'We will walk with you.'"

WRITERS ON THE BOOK

INCARNATION
Contemporary Writers on the New Testament
Edited by Alfred Corn
Viking, $19.95, 361 pp.

Dan Wakefield

Four years ago I attended a seminar on "The Life of Jesus" conducted by three Jungian analysts and their own disciples. Their advertised "new look" at Jesus was set up to prove through carefully preselected scriptural analysis that Jesus was a great moral teacher but nothing more than that; the rest of the story, including the Resurrection, was wishful myth tacked on later for recruitment through the ages of innocents such as myself to a self-serving Christianity whose rites are quaintly outmoded and whose spirit is moribund. When I ventured to suggest to these "post-Christians" (as they called themselves) that theirs was but one interpretation of the story, I was reprimanded for being out of tune with the latest biblical scholarship agreed on by enlightened people of *all* faiths.

These and many other smug intellectual ideologues who believe Jesus Christ to be a "crutch" for psychologically needy people will be shocked to see the views expressed in *Incarnation* by some of our most respected contemporary writers. Many of these well-known novelists and poets are schooled in the latest biblical scholarship—as well as the latest cultural fashions—and in writing their personal reactions to the books of the New Testament, some of them present the most lucid, lyric, and convincing testimonies of Christian faith I have ever encountered, from St Augustine to C.S. Lewis.

I am not a proseletyzer who passes out tracts to try to recruit people to any of my beliefs, especially political or religious, but the next time some condescending, cut-rate Christian-basher with a subscription to *Psychology Today* asks me how a person like me (with a B.A. from Columbia, no less!) can in this advanced year of Our Gross National Product 1990 believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I am going to read him or her aloud the essay in this book by Reynolds Price on "The Gospel According to Saint John."

Mr. Price is not only one of our most distinguished novelists (winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for *Kate Vaiden*) but also has translated Bible stories from the Greek for his book *A Palpable God*, and in this essay does his own translations of the text he elucidates. Through his knowledge as a translator and his instinct as a fiction writer, Price believes (with C.S. Lewis) that the Gospel of John was written by an eyewitness: "Hovering just at the edge of each event, or caught in its center, is the powerful sense of a pair of human eyes, so fixed in a

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This Bible, this ubiquitous, persistent black chunk of a best-seller, is a chink—often the only chink—through which the winds howl. It is a singularity, a black hole into which our rich and multiple world strays and vanishes.

—Annie Dillard, "The Gospel According to Saint Luke"
Incarnation

lover's rapt attention as to vanish nearly from our reading minds and leave us face to face with the act and the moving bodies."

In a narrative line so powerful and clean as to seem as inevitable and memorable as music, Price concludes that "...with every relevant manuscript discovery of the past century, we come closer to understanding that, once we concede the nearly intolerable premise of John's theology, nothing in his book is past the scope of a watchful, sensitive man of his time—certainly nothing past the narrative reach of a man who stood, to the end of his long life, as the single pupil in a group of twelve who could be called Beloved. With the availability of uncluttered new translations, attentive to the rapt storytelling of the Greek, we can meet John's knowledge face-to-face. Bizarre as it is in so many parts, he says in the clearest voice we have the sentence mankind craves from stories—*The Maker of all things loves and wants me*. In no other book our culture owns can we see a clearer graph of that need, that tall enormous radiant arc—fragile creatures made by God's hand, hurled into space, then caught at last by a man in some ways like ourselves, through the ark of God."

REVIEWERS

MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN, *deputy foreign editor for the* New York Times, *was bureau chief in Warsaw.*

DAVID HOLAHAN, *a free-lance writer, lives in East Haddam, Connecticut.*

DAN WAKEFIELD *is a novelist and journalist whose latest books are* Returning: A Spiritual Journey (*Doubleday*), *and* The Story of Your Life: Writing a Spiritual Autobiography (*Beacon*).

After that, I would not be able to resist reading further from the soul-shaking prose of Annie Dillard's magnificent response to the Book of Luke when she tells us that "All of the Gospels are unprecedented, unequaled, singular texts....Luke is a piece torn from wilderness. It is a blur of power, violent in its theological and narrative heat, abrupt and inexplicable. It shatters and jolts. Its grand-scale, vivid, and shifting tableaux call all in doubt." Annie Dillard here calls doubt into doubt, scoffing at the safe, Sunday-school teaching of "this scandalous document" which adults tried to use as a kind of tranquilizing agent: "By dipping us children in the Bible so often they hoped, I think, to give our lives a serious tint, and to provide us with quaintly magnificent snatches of prayer to produce as charms while, say, being mugged for our cash or jewels." Ms. Dillard grew up to take it seriously, to believe that Christ's washing of the disciples' feet—"the dirty toes"—means that it's all right to be human, that "God knows we are human, and full of evil, all of us, and we are his people anyway, and the sheep of his pasture."

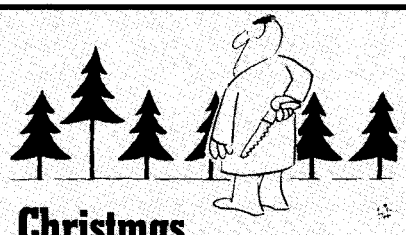
These writers are really going for it.

I got up breathless and tingling from reading Price and Dillard, and was, at the very least, engrossed in all of these pieces that include John Updike on Matthew, Mary Gordon on Mark, Larry Woiwode on Acts, Amy Clampitt on Thessalonians, and Frederick Buechner on Corinthians. Not all the contributors express the kind of singing praise and faith we hear from Price and Dillard. Just as important, though, are those who wrestle with difficult texts and honestly confess, for instance, the "dismay" of novelist John Hersey, who finds in Revelation "the total negation of the hopeful words of the Gospel."

Alfred Corn, the poet who edited this book with imagination and perception, enhances its value by including some Jewish as well as Christian writers to comment on the books of the New Testament. The Pulitzer Prize poet Anthony Hecht reminds us that "It is impossible to be a Jew of my generation without being keenly aware of anti-Semitism, and sensitivity on this point alone has invited a study of Christian doctrine." He forcefully attacks the "mistaken and self-serving Christian commonplace...that makes the New Testament the gospel of love and the Old Testament the book of law...a curious act of piracy." Hecht's eloquent protest, and his personal experience of anti-Semitic fallout from the Gospels, is crucial for Christians to hear.

Grace Schulman is a poet and translator who also contributed an essay to *Congregation: Contemporary Writers Read the Jewish Bible*, the book which preceded and served as a model for this volume. Ms. Schulman is "a Jew whose mentors (from Julian of Norwich to Gerard Manley Hopkins) were devoted Christians who wrote in English." She includes some of an own memorable poetry in her essay responding to the book of Jude that ends with this personal testimony: "It is the tension between bitterness and joy that I first perceived in Hebrew melodies and later learned from Christian writers to try to capture in English. It is the mainstay of my life and work."

Incarnation excitingly exemplifies the power of the word and the immediacy of faith in our own lives and work in the world today. It is a book that will make a difference. □



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Prayers & lives of the faithful

Lawrence S. Cunningham

It has been one of my deepest convictions that theologians should pay close attention to prayers as a source for theological reflection. Impelled by that conviction my bookshelf includes a hefty collection of prayer anthologies both new and old. I am happy now to add *A World at Prayer* which is the second edition of a work first published under the aegis of the World Council of Churches in 1978. Prayers, old and new, liturgical and devotional, have been gathered from every country of the world. The countries are divided into weeks and their religious profiles head each of the weekly cycles along with a map of the country.

A World at Prayer: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, *compiled by John Carden and the WCC, Twenty-Third Publications, $14.95, 408 pp.*

Space (and justice!) forbids me to single out any individual country but, suffice it to say, there is an ecumenical generosity in the selections. One finds striking prayers composed by contemporary authors and traditional prayers coming from the various countries. This inexpensive volume seems to me a natural for a wide audience both professional (clergy could use it as a rich resource) and lay. Beyond the spiritual nourishment there is also an enormous amount of factual information to be found within its covers. It is that rare book which can delight the browser and nourish the person interested in reflective spiritual reading. It is a rich book for such a modest investment.

There has been a continuing interest in Saint Thérèse of Lisieux as the success of the fine volumes of her writings published by the Institute of Carmelite Studies in Washington, D.C., and recent studies by Patricia O'Connor (1987) and Monica Furlong (1987) attest. Guy Gaucher's book (he was the French editor of her writings), first written in 1973, is further evidence of that ongoing interest. Gaucher concentrates on the final years of the saint's life when, racked by intractable tuberculosis, Thérèse had to live the life of an invalid in the Carmel of Lisieux. His aim is to eradicate the image of the young nun sweetly dying on a pallet, rose petals showering down upon her, while she cheerfully poured out pious ejaculations of faith and trust. In fact, as Gaucher amply demonstrates, her agonies were protracted; she experienced moments of near despair; and she was the subject of well meaning but appallingly ignorant medical ministrations available at the time. She endured all this while living in the somewhat stifled environment of a cloister which was inhabited by a goodly number of her own blood relatives as well as others not always kindly disposed toward her. Thérèse, in short, experienced the desolations of the *noche oscura* in far more than a spiritual way.

The Passion of Thérèse of Lisieux, *by Guy Gaucher, Crossroad, $12.95, 269 pp.*

Gaucher's close reading of the available sources for those last years is meticulous and careful but the book presumes that one knows the story of Thérèse's life as a whole and the names of persons closely and not so closely associated with her. For example, he twice mentions, without identifying, "Pranzini," who was, in fact, a condemned murderer for whom the young Carmelite prayed as he awaited execution. A more serious flaw of the work is Gaucher's resistance to cutting through the rather rococo pieties of Thérèsian language in order to explain why she so gripped the imagination of so many people, including such tough-minded and unsentimental admirers as the novelist Georges Bernanos. This is most definitely a work for those already conversant with the life and writings of the saint.

A decade ago, Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot down while saying Mass in his see city of San Salvador. His name is now part of that sad litany of martyrs who have been murdered by death squads in that unhappy land. The author of this filial tribute, Jon Sobrino, escaped death in 1989 because he was away from the Jesuit residence where six of his colleagues (and two lay persons) were gunned down by elements of the Salvadoran military.

Sobrino's book consists of a personal reminiscence of Romero the bishop (they were close collaborators) and five essays which reflect on the theological significance of Romero's life and death for the church in El Salvador. Since most of this book consists of previously published pieces, there is a certain repetition in the work and a presumption of familiarity with the twisted intricacies of Central American politics. The work, in short, is not a biography but, as the subtitle indicates, an act of homage to a man who is widely regarded as a saint in his native land and abroad.

Archbishop Oscar Romero: Memories and Reflections, *by Jon Sobrino, Orbis, $12.95, 214 pp.*

What comes through very clearly in Sobrino's analysis are the following: (1) Romero was, to use the phrase of William James, a "twice born" Christian, changing from a conventionally pious prelate to a fearless witness to basic Christian values; and (2) the timeworn words "prophet" and "martyr" take on texture and depth when seen, not as abstract categories of hagiography, but as lenses through which one views his life. The Brazilian poet-bishop, Pedro Casaldáliga, had it quite right when he wrote that "none shall ever still/that last homily." Blanket charges that liberation theology is "Marxist" or "Communist

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *teaches theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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inspired" will have to come to grips with the life of this gentle priest who simply would not tolerate the torture and murder of people in the name of public order. Sobrino, one of the most distinguished liberation theologians of our day, has given us a book which, while theologically exacting, is, in essence, an act of *pietas* to the memory of a contemporary martyr of the church.

1990 marks the centennial of John Henry Newman's death. His life, which he documented by the careful preservation (and

John Henry Newman: His Life and Work, *by Brian Martin. Paulist, $14.95, 160 pp.*

prudent culling) of his letters and correspondence, spanned most of the last century (1801-1890). Newman's published correspondence runs to over thirty volumes in the Oxford edition, which explains why his major biographers (Ward, Trevor, and Ker) have produced such massive works on him. Martin's biography, by contrast, weighs in at well under 200 pages and those pages are garnished with a goodly number of illustrations and photographs. Published in England in the early 1980s and recently reissued for the centennial by Paulist, it is an engaging, if somewhat breathlessly brisk, life of one of the most important ecclesial figures of modern times.

By necessity, Martin concentrates on the facts of Newman's life: what he did, when, and for what plausible motivation. There is almost no discussion of Newman's ideas nor an analysis of such subtle works as *The Grammar of Assent*. Nonetheless, Martin does write well and he knows the period (he has published a study of Newman's contemporary, John Keble). As a first entry to Newman's life, this would be a quite satisfactory work; it could well whet the appetite for a plunge into Ian Ker's authoritative *John Henry Newman* (1988) which is now, blessedly, available in paperback, or, even better, a rereading of such classic works as the *Apologia* or *The Idea of a University*.

One result of the revolution wrought by Vatican Council II has been an insistence on a theology set more firmly into historical context. The old ecclesiology which "proved" the primacy of papal power from a proof text in the Gospel of Matthew (16:18) and a catena of uncontextualized patristic citations has long given way to close studies of the evolution of church authority. The origins and limits of papal authority are especially important in ecumenical discussions because, as the late Paul VI observed, the papacy is the neuralgic point of such conversations. That is a point with which Newman was in sympathy even before he entered the Roman Catholic church and about which he had much to say both on the eve, and in the aftermath, of Vatican Council I.

Robert Eno's closely argued monograph on the rise of papal authority summarizes a good deal of recent scholarship on the evolution of the role of the bishop of Rome as an authoritative voice in the early church down through the sixth century. His conclusions are twofold: (1) the clear assertion of papal authority appears full blown only with Pope Damasus in 366, but earlier evidences of such authoritative claims can be detected in the sources; (2) outside of Rome there was a good deal of resistance to the

The Rise of the Papacy, *by Robert B. Eno, S.S., Glazier, $12.95, 184 pp.*

force of these claims. Eno's ancillary conclusion is that attempts on the part of the bishops of Rome to enforce uniformity with Roman practice (even in the West) met with what Eno calls "indifferent success" and, with what I would call "benign neglect." What Eno does not do is to come to any theological conclusions from his historical study.

My suspicion is that he would allow for the legitimacy of the petrine office as an authentic development in ecclesiology while calling on the court of history to trim

continuum

Edited by Justus George Lawler

The non-academic, academic journal that flourished in the sixties and seventies, described as "utterly daring and utterly different,"[1] and as "delving into controversy and presenting strong conviction and thorough research in a handsome format."[2]

continuum is being re-established in the nineties as a journal of history, hermeneutics, and social concern. It will appear three times during the academic year, 200 pp. each issue, centering on the following themes: Autumn--Anti-Semitism, Israel, Feminism; Winter--Reconstructing Poetic, Pictorial, Sacred Texts; Spring--Classic Spiritualities Revived.

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any excessive claims of centralized power emanating from Rome.

Eno's book is coherently written, pays careful attention to the textual evidence, and has a good deal of interesting bibliography in his notes (I especially appreciated his references to works on early archaeology, art history, and epigraphy) and in an appendix to the book. Together with the volume done by a team of Catholic and Lutheran scholars, *Peter in the New Testament* (1973), we now have a judicious pair of studies in English which give us a clearer picture of the early papacy and a standard against which we might judge its claims to authority.

Faivre's historical study of the notion of the laity in the early church makes a nice complementary study to that of Eno's on the papacy. The distinction of lay person/cleric had a long evolution in the church. Originally, as Faivre notes, every Christian was a *kleros*, i.e. one set apart by baptism. Until the fourth century, the

The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church, *by Alexandre Faivre, Paulist, $11.95, 242 pp.*

term *layman* (which had not come into common use until the third century) meant an adult baptized male who had a certain position in the church and from whom ordained ministers (clerics) could be chosen. Similarly, in the first four centuries, duties which were once common to the people generally (like that of teaching and catechesis) became slowly absorbed into offices as the church became increasingly bureaucratized and clericalized. What happened, in short, to use Faivre's term, is that *difference* of function slowly changed into *inequality* of rank as the clerical orders swelled. It would be anachronistic to think of the lay/clerical distinction as we know it today in other than developmental terms.

If Faivre's book only argued for an increasingly clericalized church it would be repeating a truism. The particular merit of this work is in its analysis of how the non-ordained functioned in the early church. The rise of monasticism—which was a lay phenomenon—is one instance, with its antipathy to clerical members, an antipathy encapsulated in the early dictum that the monk should flee from the company of women and bishops—the former because of their power to seduce and the latter because of their power to ordain! Faivre also believes that the Christianization of the Roman upper classes largely depended on the recruitment power of aristocratic women like the fourth-century matron Proba who paraphrased the gospel story in Vergilian Latin in an attempt to "inculturate" the inherited literary past and the Good News. This form of lay evangelization would be an important part of missionary life well into the early Middle Ages. Furthermore, classes of women like the widows and the virgins functioned in the church in a status midway between lay and cleric.

Faivre's book is replete with solid information and interesting insights. It makes good background reading as we attempt to get heft on many contemporary issues about ministry and service in the church. The synthesis of historical material makes this work a welcome update of Yves Congar's classic *Lay People in the Church* (1957).

There has been much discussion of the proposed compendium for a universal catechism recently circulated to the world's bishops and much of it has been negative. Those who follow such matters might be interested in a new catechism, written by

a group of French Orthodox pastors, which has been recently translated into English. Like the Roman compendium, it is not meant for children but as an aid to pastors and teachers who have the task of teaching the faith.

The Living God has, not suprisingly, all of the earmarks of the Orthodox sensibility: its Christology is high; its approach to

The Living God: A Catechism (2 vol.), *translated by Olga Dunlop, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, $24.95, 445 pp.*

Scripture is patristic; its attention to art (specifically to the tradition of icons) and liturgical texts as sources for instruction steadfast. The entire catechesis is framed within the story of salvation; the catechism begins with the meaning of Genesis and ends with eschatological reflections rooted in the Book of Revelation. This is a time-honored strategy exemplified by Augustine in his *De catechizandis rudibus* and was the usual practice in fourth-century Jerusalem where, as the traveler Egeria tells us, the bishop explained all of the events of Scripture to the neophytes during the period of Lent.

This catechism would hardly "translate" into the Western church *tout court*; it suffers from a kind of timeless character that floats over the real problems of the world. Nonetheless, its singular merits would be instructive for anyone attempting to do a rewrite of the now largely discredited (by both liberal and conservative critics) text which recently has come from Rome. First of all, it is an organic work which hews very closely to the worship experience of the church. Secondly, it avoids the moralism so endemic to Western catechesis and resists the temptation to overintellectualize religious truths into dogmatic propositions. Finally, it is rooted in biblical faith in an unabashed and straightforward fashion. One gets a feel for biblical narrative rather than a barrage of biblical snippets used as proof texts for beliefs. Catholic teachers might not find the work useful as a basic text but would certainly benefit by using it as a resource for providing depth to their instructional materials.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 594)

We don't make the return worship until we go out of church, giving ourselves to his body, his sisters and brothers.

Of course, this is not how your average cave man, or average any of us, would like to be worshiped by God. We want to see the storm go away. I'm afraid that, like playwright Jean Kerr's mother, we will have to keep on looking for a blessing that's not in disguise. Meanwhile, however, God has worshiped us just once, and goes on reenacting it for us, in the only dramatic form that becomes the reality it dramatizes. We have only to see it—just once.

JULIAN PLEASANTS

'Context' at M.I.T.

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: At the beginning of the academic year, we write to correct the impression conveyed by *Commonweal* [April 6] that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology "was abandoning a bold and potentially subversive three-year experiment in curriculum reform" referred to as the "Human Contexts of Science and Technology." In reality, the context initiative is alive and well and is developing further.

In 1986 a faculty planning committee proposed a set of elective courses on the contexts of modern science and technology. In the past three years these team-taught courses have addressed a variety of topics (AIDS, ethical issues in engineering, automation and unemployment, industrial competition in the U.S. and Asia, the decision to build the H-bomb, etc.). Rather than being abandoned, context subjects continue to be offered; indeed, twenty-two M.I.T. departments have contributed to a recently issued list of more than seventy crossdisciplinary and contextual courses.

Further, after a year-long review, M.I.T. decided last year that the "context initiative" should not be limited to undergraduates and that the range of offerings should be broadened to include public seminars, faculty minicourses, undergraduate research projects, and student-sponsored events, such as last spring's workshop on "Error, Fraud, and Misconduct in Science," planned and organized by two graduate students. M.I.T. has allocated an endowed chair to the program's co-directors and provided staff and resources to open what is now known as the Context Support Office, which has sponsored a variety of activities, including formal courses, an undergraduate research project on wastes generated by M.I.T., and workshops on the environmental crisis and M.I.T.'s role in the formulation of public policy. This year's plans include a faculty mini-course on "The Art of Engineering" and a student-sponsored biweekly series of faculty talks on "M.I.T. in Reality."

In brief, the context initiative, rooted in an integrative philosophy, has launched an important dialogue that may one day radically alter M.I.T.'s instrumentalist culture. It is a goal worth pursuing.

LAWRENCE M. LIDSKY
MERRITT ROE SMITH

The writers are, respectively, professor of nuclear engineering and professor of the history of technology at M.I.T.; they are co-directors of the program they describe.

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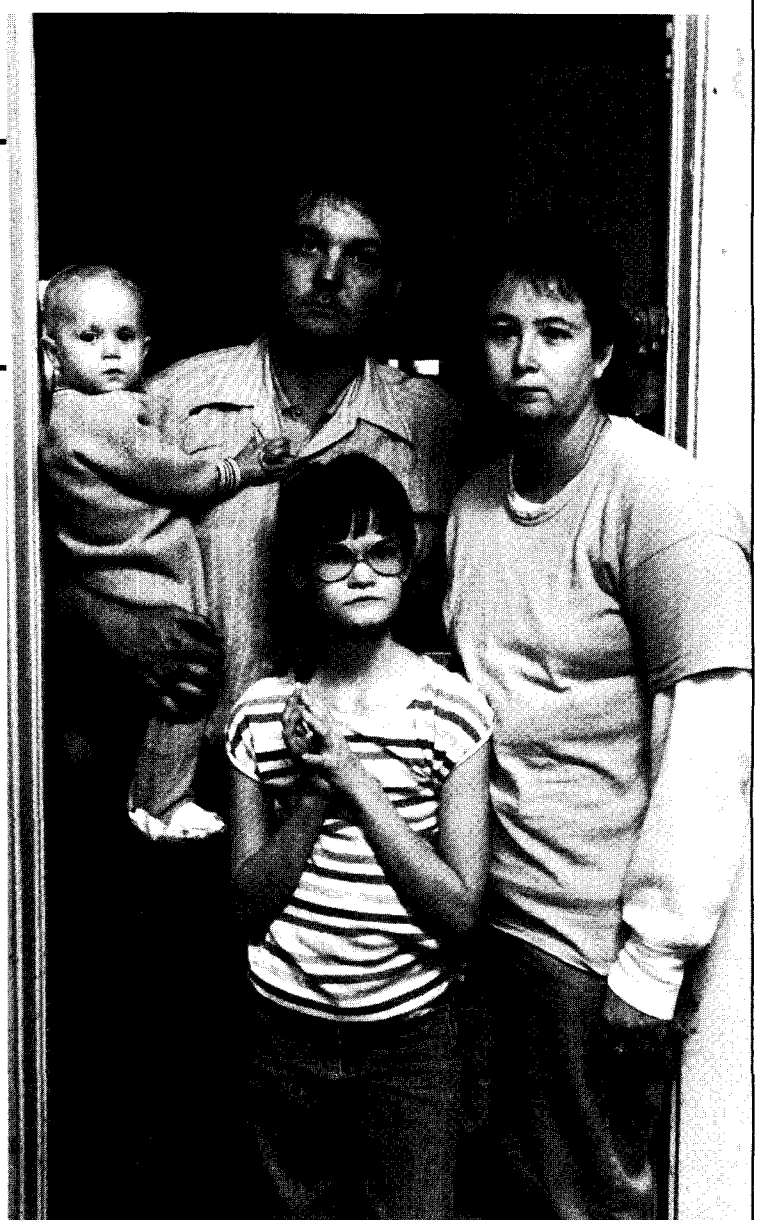

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